United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2017 No. 89

House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. DAVIDSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
May 23, 2017.

I hereby appoint the Honorable WARREN DAVIDSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

PAUL D. RYAN,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Mariel Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

SHIELD MEDICARE PATIENTS FROM FRAUD AND ABUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a truly wonderful business in State College, Pennsylvania: KCF Technologies. I had the honor of visiting KCF yesterday as it hit the milestone of hiring its 50th employee.

KCF was founded in November 2000 by three Penn State researchers: Gary Koopmann, Weicheng Chen, and Jeremy Frank. It is a private company and is employee-owned.

This rapidly growing technology innovation company focuses on putting inventions to work in the industrial world.

Its staff develops and commercializes products and solutions for industry and the military. KCF specializes in wireless sensors, energy harvesting, underwater navigation, and smart material devices. Its goal is to bring the latest technologies to life to make things we work and live with smarter.

KCF is not only expanding its workforce, but its revenues have grown at an average annual rate of more than 60 percent and over 500 percent since 2005.

It set a lofty goal for this year to save its customers $100 million in 2017, and KCF is passionately working to achieve that goal. Outside of its State College headquarters there is a thermometer sign prominently displayed to track progress. Multiple department walls within the facility are also adorned with thermometer posters. As KCF saves customers money throughout the year, the thermometers reflect that progress by filling up.

KCF Technologies not only cares about giving back to its customers, but it gives back to the Centre County community, too.

To commemorate a record-breaking sales month in April, employees exchanged their workday to volunteer at CentrePeace.

CentrePeace was established in 1994 with the purpose of providing a wholesome working environment for Centre County inmates. It operates the largest used furniture recycling project in the county, which prevents tons of items from ending up in the landfills. Inmates repair and restore electronics and furniture, participate in classes to improve their life skills, and learn how to handle conflict.

KCF Technologies is also working to improve the lives of our wounded warriors thanks to research funded by the U.S. Army Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center, and the National Science Foundation.

It is fully researching and developing energy harvesting, self-powered prosthetic devices and the innovative Kinetic Revolutions Adjustable Pylon for use with leg prostheses. These electromechanical devices make life better for amputees at every age and walk of life.

Today, with my colleague, Congressman MIKE THOMPSON of California, we will introduce a bill that will curb Medicare fraud when it comes to unlawful and unlicensed providers of orthotics and prosthetics. Our bill works to ensure that the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services stops allowing these unlicensed operations to apply for and collect Federal payments.

As a former certified therapist and licensed nursing home administrator, I know firsthand the importance of safe and reliable products for those who are in need.

When unlicensed and unaccredited providers deliver prosthetic and orthotic services, both Medicare beneficiaries and the American taxpayer are shortchanged.

I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan Medicare Orthotics and Prosthetics Improvement Act of 2017.

ECONOMIC DIGNITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. KENNEDY) for 5 minutes.

Printed on recycled paper.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. Speaker, Americans aren't asking for much: the ability to put in an honest day's work and provide for your family's basic needs; the chance to wake up in the morning without facing a series of impossible choices—food or medication, mortgage or car repair, a bus pass or school supplies.

In other words, the basic economic dignity that every single person in this country deserves.

The Trump administration claims that their budget is about dignity. Here is what this budget doesn't understand: dignity can be threatened by something beyond your control, by disability, by job loss, by illness, by accident, by automation, by a government that shames you for needing a little help when you are dealt a tough hand, by the pain of having to send your kid to school knowing that he is not going to have the lunch money that he needs.

Countless American families battle these daily heartbreaks and small injustices with their heads held high. For those families, this budget doesn't see them for their dignity, but views them with disgrace.

RECOGNIZING OMMEGANG AND ROSCOE BEER COMPANIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. FASO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate two local businesses, craft breweries, within the 19th Congressional District in New York State. These two local breweries, Brewery Ommegang, located in Cooperstown, New York, and Roscoe Beer Company, located in Sullivan County, New York, tied for first place in the Taste of New York Inaugural Craft Beer Challenge in Manhattan.

This competition was held on May 17 and was announced then in New York City. Seventy breweries from across the State participated in the Craft Beer Challenge. Beers were selected by such foodie favorites like Chef Mario Batali and many other notables in the New York food business.

New York has clearly established itself, as has the 19th Congressional District, as a craft beer destination.

We are especially proud of our local upstate craft breweries, which support our local economy, jobs, farms, and tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce and to congratulate these two fine establishments within the 19th Congressional District.

HONORING CHRIS GIBSON

Mr. FASO. Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased today to congratulate my predecessor in Congress, Congressman Chris Gibson, for his wonderful service to our country and to Congress.

Chris will soon be honored by the Columbia County Association in the city of New York as man of the year. I have known Chris for over 30 years, and I am blessed to call him and his family my neighbors in the Village of Kinderhook, where we both live.

He was truly a great Congressman and an all-around leader to upstate New York in so many ways. He exemplifies service in its many forms. Chris is a proud patriot. He served 24 years in the United States Army, rising to the rank of colonel. He is a highly decorated veteran who received not only the Bronze Star, but the Purple Heart during his combat deployments.

He was deployed seven times, including four combat tours in Iraq. He made great sacrifices, as did his family, and he fought for our freedom. As a United States Congressman, he continued to fight for the citizens of upstate New York. He served three terms in the 19th Congressional District, fulfilling his pledge to self-imposed term limits.

His legislative priorities were national security, our veteran community, and combating Lyme disease. He always had his fellow citizens' best interests at heart.

Chris Gibson was also a scholar. He graduated from Siena College in Loudonville, New York, where he earned his ROTC commission. He went on to receive not one, but two master's degrees, plus a Ph.D. in government from Cornell University. He was an assistant professor for 3 years teaching cadets at West Point at the United States Military Academy. Today he continues his love of teaching at Williams College as a Visiting Professor of Leadership Studies.

I am proud to call Chris Gibson my friend and colleague, and it is clear to anyone who knows him that he will be successful in all of his pursuits.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor former Congressman Christopher P. Gibson. I have known Chris for over 30 years, and I am blessed to call him, his wife, Mary Jo, and their three amazing children, my neighbors in the town of Kinderhook. Chris was truly a great Congressman and an all-around leader to Upstate New York. He has exemplified service in many forms.

Chris is a proud patriot. He served 24 years in the US Army, rising to the rank of Colonel. A highly decorated veteran, he was deployed seven times, including four combat tours in Iraq. He made great sacrifices, was injured in the line of duty, and fought for our freedom.

As a US Representative, he continued to fight diligently for the citizens of Upstate New York. Chris served three terms representing New York's 19th District, fulfilling his pledge to self-impose term limits. Among many legislative priorities, Chris acted to protect our national security, veterans, and those who suffer from Lyme Disease. Without question, he has always held his fellow citizens' best interests at heart.

Chris Gibson is also a scholar. He graduated from Siena college, where he achieved his ROTC Commission, and he went on to receive two Masters Degrees and a PhD from Cornell University. At West Point, Chris taught cadets for three years as an Assistant Professor. Today, he continues his love for teaching and sharing his experience in his role as the Visiting Professor of Leadership Studies at Williams College.

I am proud to call Chris Gibson my friend and colleague, and it is clear to anyone who knows him that he will be successful in all his pursuits.

EXPRESSING GRATITUDE AND APPRECIATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. AL GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express gratitude and appreciation to the many who have called. I rise to thank people for the kindness that they have shown. I rise to express my most deepest heartfelt appreciation for those who have had the courage to stand up to hatred, to stand up to bigotry. I rise, Mr. Speaker, to say thank you.

I want to especially thank those who are in leadership. I especially want to thank two persons: Representative CLYBURN and Representative BENNIE THOMPSON. They both called me to express concern and to give me advice as to how to proceed.

For those who may not know, some very ugly things have been said, but they are not in any way comparable to the many kind words that have been expressed.

So thank you to all on behalf of my staff, many of whom are young people who are having this as their first experience with Congress. Thank you on their behalf.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to explain why some of these ugly things are occurring, and the best way to do it, in my opinion, would be to use the words of J. Patrick Kinney. J. Patrick Kinney has written a poem styled ''The Cold Within,'' and this poem speaks to the extreme cupidity in our world—not stupidity, cupidity. It speaks to the extreme religiosity. It speaks to the extreme prejudice that some have to endure. It speaks to the extreme wealth and the abuse of it.

J. Patrick Kinney talks about a cold night, possibly the coldest night ever on the planet Earth. These are his words:

Six humans trapped by happenstance
In bleak and bitter cold.
Each one possessed a stick of wood
Or so the story is told.
Their dying fire in need of logs
The first man held his back
For of the faces 'round the fire
He noticed one was Black.
The next man looking 'cross the way
Saw one not of his church
And he couldn't bring himself to give
The fire his stick of birch.
The third one sat in tattered clothes.
He gave his coat a hitch.
Why should his stick be put to use
To warm the idle rich?
The rich man just sat back and thought
Of the wealth he had in store
And how to keep what he had earned
From the lazy shiftless poor.
The Black man's face bespoke revenge
As the fire passed from his sight.
For all he saw in his stick of wood
Was a chance to spite the White.
The last man of this forlorn group

Did nought except for gain.
Giving only to those who gave
Was how he played the game.
Their logs held tight in death's still hands
Was proof of human sin.
They didn't die from the cold without
They died from the cold within.

□ 1015

STOP GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. CARBAJAL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARBAJAL. Mr. Speaker, today I rise because 3 short years ago, the Isla Vista community in my district was rocked by an act of tragic and senseless gun violence. A young man took the lives of 6 UCSB students and injured 14 others. That day families were torn apart by a kind of grief that no one should have to ever experience—the loss of a child.

The tragedy in Isla Vista we remember today is once again a reminder of the consequences of inaction by Congress regarding the epidemic of gun violence across our Nation. Far too often there are many red flags of someone intending to do harm, but no one can connect the dots.

Today I introduced legislation, with my colleagues Congresswoman ESTY and Congressman BEYER, that will allow families and loved ones who see disturbing warning signs the ability to work with law enforcement and the courts so that they may intervene and better prevent acts of violence.

States like California and Connecticut have led the way on important measures to combat gun violence. This bill would encourage other States to adopt these proven preventative measures. The Gun Violence Restraining Order Act would help ensure that family members can go to court to seek a gun violence prevention order to temporarily stop someone who poses a threat to themselves or others from purchasing or possessing a gun.

When someone alerts law enforcement and members of their own family that they wish to do harm to themselves or members of the community, as was the case in Isla Vista, it is irresponsible of lawmakers not to give judges and police the ability to intervene.

I urge my colleagues to act and pass this commonsense legislation so that not one more family must live through the nightmare that parents experienced in Isla Vista on March 23, 2014.

SERVICE TO COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about national service. I am delighted, as you can see from these posters, to be standing next to President Kennedy and General McChrystal.

Many of you may know that this Monday, Memorial Day, May 29, would be the 100th birthday of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. What better way to remember his legacy than by a call to national service, a call that has been echoed by General McChrystal as well. I love the headline that says: You don't have to wear a military uniform to serve your country.

President Kennedy came up with the idea of the Peace Corps at a time when we faced nuclear threats and rising concern of proliferation of nuclear arms; at a time when Russia, as it still is today, was a very strong enemy of the United States. President Kennedy felt that the United States needed to put their best face on for the rest of the world, so he established a Peace Corps and sent the brightest and best all across the globe so that they could represent the values of this great country of ours. What better way to do that than through serving your country, by making sure you are not asking what your country can do for you but what you, in fact, can do for your country.

We are proposing a concept called ACTION for National Service, action so that we can encourage people throughout the country to participate in voluntary service. Whether you serve in the military voluntarily, the Guard or the National Reserve, or whether it is the Peace Corps, AmeriCorps VISTA, or you are part of the Corporation for National and Community Service and one of the many agencies that work to provide a better world both here at home and abroad.

Our goal is very simple and direct. We want to make sure, as General McChrystal has outlined, that by 2026, which would be the 250th birthday of this Nation, that we have a million volunteers annually who are coming in to service. We will provide an incentive for people to do so, very clear and simple: If you serve your country, we will help you get through college. If you have been through college and you want to serve your country, if you serve your Nation, we will forgive your college debt.

We know that, in attracting a million people to public service, we can do great good across the globe. We want to make sure that we raise the Corporation for National and Community Service to a Cabinet-level position within the White House. We want to encourage people. More than 400,000 millennials were turned away from serving their country last year. Less than 1 percent of the Nation, including all of our military and the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps VISTA combined, account for less than 1 percent of the Nation. How can a nation long survive with a population of 330 million people and less than 1 percent of its countrymen serving this great Nation of ours?

This is a national crisis. At a time when we have to make sure that we are encouraging and nurturing our great democracy, we need our citizens to become more involved. That is why, on Thursday of this week, we are going to be rolling out a bill that will do just that and do so in a manner that will elevate the Corporation for National and Community Service to a Cabinet-level position, create the goal of establishing a million volunteers annually by 2026, incentivizing them to serve so that if you serve your country, we will forgive your debt; or if you serve your country, we will help you go to college or get the kind of training that you need to be a participant while also gaining the knowledge and expertise and the values that come from community service. Join us. We will be live on YouTube Thursday morning at 9 o'clock.

MAY IS AN IMPORTANT MONTH TO HOOSIERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. MESSER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MESSER. Mr. Speaker, May is an important month for Hoosiers. We celebrate Indiana's great racing tradition, the Indianapolis 500, and our longstanding military tradition on Memorial Day and during Military Appreciation Month.

There are almost half a million veterans living in Indiana today in addition to the 30,000 Hoosiers currently serving in the armed services, Reserve, and the Guard. We are proud of our military men and women in Indiana. These honorable Hoosiers are our fathers, sons, mothers, daughters, neighbors, and friends. Service and patriotic duty is the Hoosier way. Actually, both of my grandfathers, my Grandpa Lathery and my Grandpa Rotzien, served our Nation in the armed services.

This May, as we gather together to celebrate our great Hoosier traditions, let's remember the reason that we get to celebrate. It is all thanks to the men and women who have put their lives on the line so that each of us can be free. On Memorial Day, we, of course, remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms, but every day we can remember that we owe our military families and our vets a debt that can never be repaid. Let's all do everything we can to ensure they are honored every day.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 24 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

God of mercy, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We thank You once again that we can come before You and ask guidance for the men and women of this assembly. Send Your spirit of peace, honesty, and fairness during this week when the budget is being considered and the work of appropriations continues.

As violence and the threat of violence hang over our world, may we be continually thankful for and supportive of those whose life's work is keeping us safe. Send Your spirit of healing and comfort to those who are victims of these horrors in our world.

May we in America, and all men and women of good will, be committed to working for peace in our homes, neighborhoods, and throughout our land and the world.

Bless us this day and every day. May all that is done be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. HILL led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

RECOGNIZING MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, May marks Military Appreciation Month, a special time to recognize the tremendous support and encouragement families offer their servicemembers. As the son of a Flying Tiger who served in India and China, and as the grateful father of four sons who have all served overseas, and as a 31-year veteran of the Army Reserve and Guard, I know firsthand the commitment of our troops, veterans, and military families.

Last week, I was honored to join Senator ROY BLUNT, Senator KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND, and Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS to introduce commonsense, bipartisan legislation, the Military Families Stability Act, which provides for greater flexibility by allowing military families a 6-month option of moving to the start of their next assignment.

The happiness and success of our military families is critical to overall troop readiness and retention. I am confident this legislation will greatly benefit families around the country.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th in the global war on terrorism. We offer our sympathy and solidarity for the victims of Manchester and our beloved allies in the United Kingdom. Together with members of the European Union Parliament, we will defeat the murderous losers.

OPPOSING PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, today the President put forward his budget proposal. It will be damaging to the people in our communities and the places that we call home.

It cuts Medicaid by over $600 billion and cuts the food stamp program by over 25 percent, affecting the most needy within our communities. It slashes infrastructure programs, eliminates TIGER grants, cuts student loan and financial aid programs, and includes catastrophic cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency.

For my home State of Hawaii, this budget zeroes out Federal funding for the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grants, the Native Hawaiian Loan Guarantee program, and cuts Native Hawaiian education programs by nearly $33 million, crippling the progress that has been made for over 30 years to strengthen Native Hawaiian early education, literacy, gifted and talented education programs, higher education, vocational programs, and more.

I strongly oppose this budget, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to pass a budget that actually serves the people and our planet.

VENEZUELA IS A FAILED STATE

(Mr. HILL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, all of us in the Western Hemisphere are in horror. Venezuela is a failed state and potentially on the brink of civil war. The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this week that thousands of Cuban intelligence agents are helping the Maduro regime maintain control over the army, while Maduro orders his soldiers to shoot his own people who are demonstrating in the streets.

We cannot let countries like China, Russia, Iran, and Cuba continue to play a role in propping up the Maduro regime. While I commend Treasury Secretary Mnuchin for issuing sanctions against individuals of the Venezuelan Supreme Court, I call on the administration to ratchet up the pressure on these outside forces and have them answer for their role in the emergency situation in Venezuela.

While we face many challenges across the globe, America must reengage in the Western Hemisphere and not let the neighbors in our backyard slide back into tyranny.

PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET SHORTSIGHTED AND RECKLESS

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, well, the President's budget is shortsighted. It is reckless. Hopefully, it is dead on arrival when it lands here in the House.

President Trump and Republicans want to throw billions of dollars more on defense programs and drastically cut investments in job training, afterschool programs, and lifesaving medical research.

Think about this:

It cuts Social Security disability benefits.

If you are a worker in Saginaw looking for your next job, you are out of luck. President Trump wants to cut worker training programs.

If you are a senior in Bay City, Michigan, and you depend on Meals on Wheels, too bad. President Trump wants to take away those meals, take away that contact that you have.

If you are a parent in Flint with a child in Head Start just trying to find a way forward, too bad. President Trump's budget will cut support for education and for early childhood education.

A budget is a statement of our values. What does this document say about the values of this President?

We must reject the President's proposed budget. It is bad for America.

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

(Mr. WILLIAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to recognize Military Appreciation Month.

This month allows us the opportunity to educate Americans regarding the impact our military has had throughout history.

This month allows us to honor the important men and women who have served and who are serving in uniform.

Mr. Speaker, this month allows us to celebrate over 90 million patriots who chose to put our country before themselves.

As a Representative of the 25th Congressional District of Texas, it is my

honor to represent Fort Hood Army Base. I am proud to speak on behalf of ''The Great Place.'' Located in Killeen, Texas, this 340-square-mile installation is the gold standard for the Army.

My visits to Fort Hood have given me a deeper appreciation for our military and their families. This appreciation is why I would like to recognize Memorial Day, which we will all celebrate on Monday, May 29.

This day reminds us of the brave men and women who gave up their todays so we could have our tomorrows. It gives us a chance to say thank you to a soldier, sailor, airman, coastguardsman, or a marine. Please join me in paying tribute to military members who have given our country the ultimate sacrifice.

May God bless our troops. God bless The Great Place, and God bless the United States of America.

In God we trust.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS

(Mr. CONNOLLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the international students and the U.S. institutions of higher education they attend. They have been unfairly penalized by the Trump administration through unconstitutional and illegal immigration executive orders.

I urge my colleagues and the administration to recognize the vital contribution these international students make to our country. International students who spend time in the United States become ambassadors when they return home, sharing an appreciation of our values, counteracting stereotypes about Americans and the United States, and enhancing respect for cultural differences and democratic norms.

International students contribute to the economic well-being of the United States. According to the Association of International Educators, during the last academic year, international students and their families supported 400,000 jobs and contributed $33 billion to our domestic economy. In my district alone, 4,978 international students and families contributed $137 million to our local economy, supporting 1,725 jobs.

Actions taken by this administration and this President have generated a great deal of fear and uncertainty within academia. It hurts America. I urge us to support more international students to come to our country.

RECOGNIZING FLAT ROCK MIDDLE SCHOOL

(Mr. FERGUSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the hard work of the students and faculty at Flat Rock Middle School in Tyrone, Georgia.

Four years ago, Dr. Monica Reckley decided to found a STEM program at Flat Rock to give her students more than just a traditional classroom experience. She hoped to show them how science, technology, math, and engineering could lead to future careers.

Today, the program has 150 students spread over 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, and it is helping students develop an interest that could lead them to new professional opportunities. The program introduces students to STEM, brings in speakers from these fields, and allows students to participate in related competitions.

Last month, 10 students from the program participated in the Georgia Tech InVenture Challenge and had several inventions showcased. These inventions included a bulletproof vest designed specifically for female police officers, a wireless vital signs monitoring device for elderly patients, a dental floss guard to make flossing easier, and an extension cord and power outlet combination that reduces the number of electrical outlets needed in a home.

I am so proud of these students and the opportunities this school district has provided to encourage young people to explore careers in the 21st century.

I am a proud supporter of career and technical education programs because they prepare students and young people for work and careers in the modern workforce.

PRESIDENT'S BUDGET IS AWFUL

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak out against the President's newly released budget request.

When I began reading this budget request, only one word came to mind, at least that I can say here—awful:

It is an awful budget for American families struggling to make ends meet who haven't had a raise in years.

It is an awful budget for older Americans who paid into Social Security with the promise that it would be there for them.

It is an awful budget for local businesses who can't get their products to consumers because of our crumbling roads and bridges.

It is an awful budget for common sense, with unnecessary spending on a border wall that the American people will pay for.

It is an awful budget because it sets the stage for even more waste, fraud, and abuse in government.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the only group that this budget isn't awful for is the President and his friends.

The President calls this an America First budget, so why is it leaving so many American families behind?

I urge my colleagues to completely reject this awful budget that doesn't create jobs, doesn't uplift families, and doesn't make any sense.

ROWLAND THEATRE CELEBRATES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a true gem in Philipsburg, Pennsylvania, the Rowland Theatre, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

Rowland Theatre opened its doors on June 4, 1917. Its visionary was Congressman Charles Rowland, who was elected to the House of Representatives in 1915 and represented the 21st Congressional District, which included Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, and McKean Counties.

The Rowland Theatre was actually one small part of Congressman Rowland's life, but it would be the project that would become his legacy. The theater not only showed the latest silent movies during its first few decades, it was also the location for the top traveling shows in the country.

Now the Rowland Theatre shows feature films and also hosts plays, as well as choir and orchestra performances. The 1,000-seat theater remains an anchor of downtown Philipsburg, and it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Rowland Theatre is open 364 days a year, closing only on Christmas Eve.

Mr. Speaker, the Rowland Theatre is a real treasure. Here is to another 100 years.

Congratulations.

□ 1215

RAISING THE DIALOGUE ON MIDDLE NEIGHBORHOODS

(Mr. EVANS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, President Trump's budget is officially live, and he plans to make massive cuts to programs that help our hardworking families get ahead.

What do we have to lose under President Trump's budget? What don't we have to lose? Education programs for our children, Medicare and Medicaid for the health and safety of our neighborhoods, affordable housing, SNAP benefits, veterans, seniors, and the hits keep coming. A budget is a moral document, and this one shortchanges Americans from the middle neighborhoods in Philadelphia to Beaver, Pennsylvania.

The President talks about putting the country first, yet the budget does no such thing.

There is a big difference between governing and campaigning. President Trump, our neighborhoods have a lot to lose when it comes to your budget. Over 40 percent of the populations of

Philadelphia live in what you call middle neighborhoods. Middle neighborhoods are neighborhoods caught between bust and boom, neighborhoods that are doing well enough.

Our neighborhoods compete for people. My district has a poverty rate of 28 percent. Mr. President, now is not the time to make deep cuts to programs our neighbors rely on while calling for massive tax cuts for the rich.

Instead, we need to make investments in food policy, social safety net, education policy, and make access to capital and credit. Our communities have too much to lose. Together we will build stronger neighborhoods, block by block.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). Members are reminded to address all comments to the Chair, not to other Members or to the President.

HONORING THOSE WHO DIED FOR OUR FREEDOM

(Mr. SMUCKER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SMUCKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and remember those who fought and died for our freedom, to thank the brave men and women who today defend our freedom, and to recognize the sacrifice of all their families.

Pennsylvania has produced some of the greatest examples of valor and bravery the world has ever seen. It is home to pivotal moments in American history, like Gettysburg, Valley Forge, and the Battle of Lake Erie. Pennsylvania's sons have stormed the beaches of Normandy. They have liberated the oppressed from fascism and communism, and they have sought out terror in the depths of Afghanistan and Iraq in order to protect our way of life.

Memorial Day is coming up this weekend. We will all enjoy time with our families and friends, but we must always remember that is only possible because of the brave men and women who gave what Abraham Lincoln called the ''last full measure of devotion,'' and those who protect us today.

THE UNAFFORDABLE HEALTHCARE BILL

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, currently a panel of Republican Senators are deciding the fate of millions of American women's healthcare. Tragically, their starting point is the House-passed bill that would force new moms on Medicaid to return to work right after birth, reduce women's access to copays for contraception, weaken protections for preexisting conditions like pregnancy, and eliminate the guarantee of essential health benefits that provides services like mammograms and cervical cancer screenings, services that save lives.

All of these measures hurt women—and only women—and will do enormous harm to the health and well-being of women from childhood to old age. It is an outrage and a gross injustice when women are treated so unequally with such gross disparity and such total disregard for their lives and well-being.

It is one more powerful reason why this Congress should pass and send to the States to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, declaring in no uncertain terms that women are entitled to equal rights, equal justice, equal treatment, equal protection under the law, and that means equal treatment in healthcare. In this country, it is time, at long last, for equal to mean just that, equal.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER JO-ANN BURDIAN

(Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with much admiration and respect for Commander Jo-Ann Burdian of the United States Coast Guard.

Commander Burdian's tenure in the House of Representatives as a congressional liaison for the United States Coast Guard is coming to an end. She is on her second tour of duty, 3 years each, for a total of 6 years. During her tenure in the House of Representatives, we have seen unprecedented growth and change in the mission of the United States Coast Guard. It has become somewhat of a Swiss Army knife of an agency, of a command, covering everything from oil spills to homeland security, 9/11, alien interdiction, drug interdiction, defense missions, maritime security, and many other important missions around the world.

Commander Burdian has fostered incredible relationships with Members, staff, and oversight committees and done a fantastic job for both sides of the aisle, including assisting in the passage of two major Coast Guard authorization bills, three appropriations bills, full funding of the Offshore Patrol Cutter, the Fast Response Cutter, the National Security Cutter, and helping to secure $150 million in the FY17 budget to progress polar icebreaker capabilities for the United States.

Commander Burdian's hard work and efforts for the House of Representatives were rewarded with her appointment to chief of response for Sector Puget Sound. I want to commend her and her family for incredible service to the United States.

MAY IS FOSTER CARE MONTH

(Mrs. LAWRENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize May as National Foster Care Month.

In Michigan, there are nearly 14,000 children in foster care and more than 400,000 children nationwide all in need of love and support. Studies have shown the majority of children in foster care are affected by mental health issues and often lack access to the help they need. We need to push for access to services to support these vulnerable children to avoid serious risks in the future.

I encourage my colleagues to continue working together in a bipartisan manner to address the needs of our foster care system. I also want to thank KAREN BASS for raising awareness on the critical needs facing foster youth through the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth. During this month and beyond, let us celebrate foster parents and caregivers and recommit to ensuring every child has a permanent, safe, and loving family.

HONORING THE LIFE OF YODELL BILLAH

(Mr. O'HALLERAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay my respects to Yodell Billah, who passed away earlier this month at the age of 97. Mr. Billah was a Navajo code talker and World War II Army veteran, fighting against the Germans in Italy until their surrender in 1945. His heroic actions and the work of our code talkers saved the lives of innumerable soldiers and civilians.

For his service, he was awarded the American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, and the European African Middle East Campaign Medal.

We can never repay the debts that we owe Mr. Billah, code talkers from all our Tribal Nations, and our veterans, but I am proud and humbled to stand before you today to bring attention to his service and honor his legacy.

Mr. Billah will forever be remembered as an active member of his community, a loving father, a grandfather, and, above all, a hero.

WE MUST RESPOND TO THE GLOBAL CRISIS OF HUNGER AND FAMINE

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, 20 million people in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Nigeria are on the brink of famine. We saw this coming. The warning signs were there long before January of this year.

I am so proud that Republicans and Democrats joined together to include an additional $1 billion in the FY 2017 omnibus bill to address these famines.

Our citizens and our farmers have always been generous in times of such grave need. They know that we have to protect children from hunger and the

violence of war. They know that we need to support diplomacy and development to avoid future catastrophes.

Our united effort must continue in FY 2018, but the President's budget eliminates the Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole programs, and reduces funding for disaster assistance. I only hope President Trump and Secretary Tillerson will come to their senses. We must not stand by and watch millions of children and families literally starve to death. We must act, and we must lead.

BUDGETS ARE ABOUT PRIORITIES

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, today the President put forth his budget proposal. The budget includes roughly $2.5 trillion in cuts to programs that help struggling families and elderly and disabled people afford the basics, like putting food on the table, keeping a roof over their heads, and affording healthcare.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, would be cut by $192 billion over the next decade. Medicaid, the health program for the poor, would be cut by $800 billion. TANF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, would be cut by $21 billion. In 2014, 20 percent of the population of my district, the Virgin Islands, received SNAP. SNAP feeds primarily poor children. In 2013, 19 percent of Virgin Islands' children were covered under Medicaid. Another 27 percent went without any health coverage at all.

Mr. Speaker, budgets are about priorities. Unfortunately, our President's priorities are clear: more tax cuts for the wealthy taking precedence over ensuring that poor children have enough to eat, that people with physical and mental disabilities can make ends meet, and that low- and moderate-income Americans have access to healthcare. The budget would make inequality and poverty significantly worse, while allowing deficits, when honestly measured, to soar. Mr. Speaker, we must reject this budget.

HONORING THE HEROES OF OUR ARMED FORCES

(Mr. YODER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. YODER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today ahead of Memorial Day next week to honor the heroes of our Armed Forces who have made the ultimate sacrifice and service to our Nation and to thank their fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who were blessed to make it back home to their loved ones.

From the Revolutionary War through the war on terror, more than 1.3 million Americans have given their lives protecting our freedoms. Today, Congress is honoring those lost by passing several bills to help protect our surviving veterans and ensure they are treated with the dignity and respect they have earned. Our bills will ensure that the VA medical centers are meeting compliance requirements, help veterans have better access to nursing home care, increase the rates for veterans' compensation for service-connected disabilities, and more.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no better way to celebrate Memorial Day and honor the memory of those lost than by helping our Nation's veterans, who have sacrificed so much to help keep America safe. I urge all of my colleagues to support these measures today and our veterans each and every day.

BIG TALK AND BROKEN PROMISES

(Mr. SOTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, today we have a new Trump budget and more broken promises. If you recall on May 7, 2015, the President said: ''I was the first and only potential GOP candidate to state there will be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.''

Broken promise number one. His budget cuts Medicaid, it cuts Medicare, it cuts Social Security.

In The Washington Post on January 15, 2017, the President said: ''We are going to have insurance for everybody. Much less expensive and much better.''

This broken promise number two is that he cuts $1.4 trillion out of healthcare and covers 24 million less people, jacking up insurance rates for countless others.

Broken promise number three to the Farm Bureau at ag.com on April 24, 2017: ''I support a strong safety net for our Nation's farmers.'' Yet he cuts $50 billion over 10 years from farm subsidies, including critical citrus greening research dollars for central Florida, where I represent.

Then on September 28, 2016, The Washington Times, he says: ''I will be the greatest President for jobs that God's ever created.'' He is cutting the National Institutes of Health, critical research dollars by $5.8 billion, cutting NASA by $200 million, cutting National Science Foundation by $776 million. We see big talk and broken promises.

□ 1230

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 953, REDUCING REGULATORY BURDENS ACT OF 2017

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 348 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 348

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 953) to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. It shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115-21. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Georgia is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I found myself listening to the Reading Clerk as he read through the rule. It is a fairly straightforward rule, but it sounded pretty complicated as he was going through it. And I am reminded that

standing to your left is one of the gentlemen that helps us sort through those issues.

As every Member of this institution knows, who was listening to the colloquy last week, Brian Cooper is leaving this House after 35 years of public service, honorable service, showing up day in and day out. My friend, Mr. MCGOVERN, and I, working on the Rules Committee, sometimes go until 2, 3, or 4 in the morning. Well, folks like Mr. Cooper can't go home until the Rules Committee goes home.

So day in and day out, with absolutely no pomp or circumstance, just dedicated public service, Brian Cooper served this institution. I fear this will be the last time he and I are on the floor together while I have control of the microphone. And I did not want to yield control of that microphone without telling how much his assistance has meant to me.

You know, Mr. Speaker, standing in that chair is a powerful responsibility. The burden sometimes is a lot to bear. When you are surrounded by a team of excellence, as you are today, with Ethan to your right and Brian to your left, I know you do that with great confidence. I am grateful to folks who help us to succeed.

Thank you, Mr. Cooper, for all of that service.

Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 348 is a structured rule. It provides for consideration of H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017. It makes in order two amendments from my Democratic colleagues—one from Ms. ESTY and one from Mr. HUFFMAN.

As you might remember, the House passed a nearly identical version of this bill last year, Mr. Speaker, but, unfortunately, it did not get across the finish line in the Senate, so it did not make it to the President's desk. We are trying again this year. My sincere hope is that we will succeed.

Mr. Speaker, I know that you hear from constituents, as I do, talking about regulatory burdens, and why can't we bring commonsense rules and regulations to Washington. H.R. 953, the bill that this rule would make in order, is an attempt to do that.

This bill prohibits the EPA from requiring unnecessary and duplicative pollution permits for certain pesticides. Now, so often when we start a sentence with ''this prevents the EPA,'' folks think: Oh, there go those Republicans again going after the environment, waiving those regulations that protect friends and family.

Well, as you know, Mr. Speaker, that accusation is never accurate. But, in particular, it fails to address this situation.

For decade upon decade, the EPA has regulated pesticides in this country. If we pass H.R. 953 today, for decades and decades to come, the EPA will continue to regulate pesticides in this country.

As a result of litigation, Mr. Speaker, the courts are forcing the EPA not to regulate pesticides as pesticides, but to regulate pesticides as pollutant discharges, as if there is something else to do with pesticides other than to spray it.

They are saying that you can't just get a permit to use your pesticide, Mr. Speaker. You can't just read the label and the proper application and get a permit to apply, as indicated on the label. You must also get a permit to discharge a pollutant as if the pesticide is not already regulated as a pesticide itself.

Mr. Speaker, it makes no sense. The good news is I am surround by a team of excellence here in the United States House of Representatives and, in a bipartisan way, we have already agreed that it makes no sense.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, we brought a substantially similar measure to the floor, and we passed it under a process called suspension of the rules. It is a process we save for those bills that are relatively noncontroversial. It passed in a bipartisan way, but didn't make it across the Senate floor.

We brought it back again, Mr. Speaker, to this floor. We brought it under a rule, as we are doing today. It passed again in a bipartisan way. We sent it to the Senate, but couldn't make it across the Senate floor.

Mr. Speaker, we added it to the farm bill that we passed here in the House, which, again, passed in a bipartisan way. We sent it over to the Senate and it was stripped out on the Senate side.

Mr. Speaker, we have come together time and time again as a body to move this commonsense regulatory reform forward. It is my great hope that I will get support from both sides of the aisle again today not just on this rule, but on the underlying legislation, and that we will move forward in a bipartisan way again.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. MCGOVERN asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, let me begin as well and echo what Mr. WOODALL said in praising Brian Cooper for his many decades of service to this body. We appreciate all of his years of service. We appreciate all of the years he drove back and forth to work from Baltimore. And we appreciate the incredible patience that he has demonstrated over the years by having to listen to us time and time again.

One of the great joys of serving in this body is that you meet some remarkable people. Brian Cooper is certainly a remarkable person, and he will be missed. And I think on behalf of everybody here, we want to say: thank you.

Mr. Speaker, let me rise in strong opposition to this rule and to the underlying legislation.

My colleague, Mr. WOODALL, just referenced all of the times we passed it, it went over to the Senate, and it didn't go anywhere. Maybe we should take a hint from the Senate that it is not a good bill and we ought to kind of reconsider some of the aspects of this bill.

But here we are again on the House floor with yet another regulatory rollback. It is shameful that the leadership of this House continues to waste precious time on bills that seem to address the concerns of Big Industry over the needs of our constituents, especially as we have so much that needs to be accomplished.

By the way, whatever happened to regular order? Do you remember when committees held hearings and markups?

The Agriculture Committee, on which I serve, did not hold a hearing. It held a markup, but it did not hold a hearing. And the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the committee with primary jurisdiction over this bill, held no hearing and did no markup.

And let's talk about amendments. The majority made in order less than half of the amendments submitted—two amendments—but they blocked through completely germane amendments. Members jumped through all of the hoops, they dotted all of the Is, and they crossed all of the Ts. These were properly drafted amendments, and they were blocked because the Republican majority was afraid to vote on them.

Now, what were these amendments?

Well, an amendment to prohibit the discharge of toxics in such circumstances where they would be harmful to pregnant women or harm fetal or early childhood development. The amendment protects pregnant women and children. Blocked.

An amendment to create an exception for communities that use a source of drinking water where a Federal or State emergency declaration has been issued due to a threat to public health, such as heightened exposure to an identified contaminant. Blocked.

An amendment to ensure existing Clean Water Act protections apply to waters that a State has already determined are polluted by pesticides. Blocked.

They were blocked because they would have passed.

Why are my colleagues afraid of protecting pregnant women, and ensuring clean drinking water?

That is what these amendments were about. They were germane. The only reason why they are not in order is because you chose to block them in the Rules Committee.

I would say to my Republican friends: You are not running this institution. You are ruining this institution. This is supposed to be a deliberative body. Let's start acting like it. And that means bringing germane amendments to the floor, letting us have a debate, letting Republicans and

Democrats debate, and then vote on those amendments.

There is not a single reason at all other than the fact that the Republican leadership did not want these amendments to pass that they were not made in order. That is not the way this place is supposed to work.

And speaking of a bad process, late last week, Billy House at Bloomberg News broke the news that the House may need to vote again on this devastating TrumpCare bill.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the article by Billy House.

[From www.bloomberg.com, May 18, 2017]

HOUSE MAY NEED TO VOTE AGAIN ON GOP OBAMACARE REPEAL BILL

(By Billy House)

House Republicans barely managed to pass their Obamacare repeal bill earlier this month, and they now face the possibility of having to vote again on their controversial health measure.

House Speaker Paul Ryan hasn't yet sent the bill to the Senate because there's a chance that parts of it may need to be redone, depending on how the Congressional Budget Office estimates its effects. House leaders want to make sure the bill conforms with Senate rules for reconciliation, a mechanism that allows Senate Republicans to pass the bill with a simple majority.

Republicans had rushed to vote on the health bill so the Senate could get a quick start on it, even before the CBO had finished analyzing a series of last-minute changes. The CBO is expected to release an updated estimate next week.

''Unaware,'' said Representative Jeff Denham of California, with noticeable surprise Thursday, when advised that his party leaders still hadn't sent the bill over to the Senate. Denham was one of the House Republicans who ended up voting for the measure, after earlier in the week opposing it.

''I am on the whip team and we have a lot of conversations, but we have not had that one. So I am going to look into it,'' said Denham, a member of the party's vote-counting team.

DOWNPLAYING CONCERN

One senior GOP aide downplayed any concern over the potential trouble from the CBO report, depicting it as hypothetical, and saying that leaders will cross that bridge if they need to.

According to several aides and other procedural experts, if Republicans send the bill to the Senate now and the CBO later concludes it doesn't save at least $2 billion, it would doom the bill and Republicans would have to start their repeal effort all over with a new budget resolution. Congressional rules would likely prevent Republicans from fixing the bill after it's in the Senate, the aides said.

In the Senate, the bill must hit separate $1 billion deficit reduction targets in the jurisdiction of the Finance Committee and the chamber's health committee. Republican aides said failing to meet those numbers would force the House to fix the bill even if the legislation meets the overall cost-savings target.

If Republican leaders hold onto the bill until the CBO report is released, then Ryan and his team could still redo it if necessary. That would require at least one more House vote of some sort.

Ryan told conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt on Friday that he doesn't think the House will need to vote again on the health law. ''We just want to, out of an abundance of caution, wait to send the bill over to the Senate when we get the final score,'' Ryan said.

That vote could be cloaked in some kind of arcane procedural move, but it would still be depicted as a proxy for yet another vote on the same bill—and reluctant Republicans will once again be forced to decide whether to back it. Only this time, they would also be saddled with the CBO's latest findings about the bill's costs and impacts.

Republicans had a sizable deficit reduction cushion—$150 billion—before several amendments were added to the bill at the last minute, including changes allowing states to legalize much skimpier health insurance plans.

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

It's unclear what assumptions the CBO will make about what states will do with that newly created flexibility. If millions of people sign up for much cheaper, minimal insurance, that could trigger billions—and potentially even hundreds of billions—in costs over a decade because of the House bill's health insurance tax credits.

''We've got to wait for the CBO score,'' said Greg Walden of Oregon, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which authored much of the bill. ''To prove that you meet the reconciliation test.''

But other senior Republicans weren't aware that leaders had been holding onto the bill.

''I had no idea,'' Dennis Ross of Florida, another member of the vote-counting team, said Thursday, adding that the prospect of another vote ''does concern me.''

GOP leaders never said publicly they were planning to hold on to the bill for two weeks or longer.

DEMOCRATS' CRITICISM

''Every school child knows that when you pass a bill in the House, you send it to the Senate,'' said Louise Slaughter, the ranking Democrat on the House Rules Committee. ''You don't hide it in a drawer somewhere for two weeks, while you wait for information that you should have had before you passed it.''

The speaker and other Republicans urgently pushed their May 4 floor vote, despite a polarized Republican conference, using the frantic final hours to win over holdouts. Even so, 20 Republicans still voted against the bill. After the bill squeaked through, Ryan and other senior Republicans dashed to the White House for an unusual celebration of a one-chamber vote.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to make sure everyone understands that. We thought we were through with it here in the House, but we may not be. After Republicans used emergency procedures on more than one occasion to rush their bill through the House of Representatives, we found out that Republican leaders had yet to send a bill over to the Senate for its consideration. Instead, they have been hiding the bill for nearly 3 weeks.

What happened to the urgency that my colleagues were talking about a few weeks ago?

We heard from our Republican friends that the sky would fall if we didn't act upon TrumpCare immediately. It had to be done right then and there. We couldn't slow down long enough to hear from the nonpartisan experts at the Congressional Budget Office. We couldn't slow down enough so that people could actually read what was in the bill. We couldn't slow down enough to do hearings or to get estimates on how this massive bill would impact the healthcare of millions of Americans.

I think it has become clear to all of us, Mr. Speaker, that the only reason to rush through this process was to trick their own Members into voting for this disastrous bill. It was to keep their Members from seeing the CBO score before they voted for the bill, because if they had seen it, many of them may not have voted for it. Republican leadership couldn't risk transparency, and they wouldn't let the facts get in the way of passing TrumpCare.

We expect CBO to release their final analysis tomorrow. Finally, we will know how many millions of Americans will be kicked off of their healthcare because of these reckless and heartless Republican policies. We will find out how devastating this bill will be for millions of Americans with preexisting conditions. And we will finally learn just how big that tax cut for wealthy Americans is going to be.

I guess my question to Republican leaders of this House is: What was the rush? If you were going to have to hold up the bill over here until the CBO score was released anyway, why couldn't we just have waited to receive this very important information before we asked the House to vote on this terrible bill?

Oh, wait. I know why the Republican leadership needed to move TrumpCare so fast, so that the bill's namesake—President Trump—didn't throw a temper tantrum. That is what this was all about. So he wouldn't call them out in one of his infamous Twitter rants.

□ 1245

But it wasn't about good legislating. It was a lousy process basically designed to prematurely shove a bill through that is bad for Americans, all for some headline or temporary political gain.

Now, if you have been watching the news lately, you will notice that our 45th President hasn't been generating the best headlines, what with ''this Russia thing''—those are his words—constant leaks of information from his staff to the press, never mind the President's leaking of sensitive classified information on national security matters.

President Trump needed a win for himself, even if it is a loss for the American people. As we all know, it is all about him.

Now, I remind my Republican colleagues that they work for the American people, that the ultimate boss for all of us is our constituents, not the President of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, the Republican majority has made a habit of completely skirting regular order and rushing through legislation crafted behind closed doors with no opportunity for meaningful debate and consideration, and this TrumpCare bill is a prime example.

We had emergency meetings, backroom deals, and fixes to the fixes to the fixes, and what we were left with is a lousy product that we may have to consider again. My Republican colleagues should be ashamed of themselves.

Process matters. We are on the Rules Committee. If you don't believe process matters, you ought to get on a different committee. It matters for the integrity of this institution, and it matters if we are to prevent lousy legislation.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, let me say a few words about the Trump budget that was just released this morning.

We are still digging through the text and combing through the details, but from what we have already seen, it is devastating. Reports indicate that this budget makes the deepest cuts to Federal programs that help the most vulnerable, the poorest of the poor. Mr. Speaker, that is nothing to be proud of.

At a time when our crumbling infrastructure needs repair, our kids need access to affordable education, and our workers need training to move into high-tech jobs, we simply cannot afford to turn our back on these critical investments that will move our country forward. But this budget plan does just that.

Since we are on the floor to talk about an antienvironment bill today, I should note that the Environmental Protection Agency is among the agencies hardest hit by President Trump's ruthless proposal. Through massive cuts to the EPA, the Trump administration is paving the way toward dirtier air and more polluted water. But my Republican colleagues don't seem to be too concerned with that. They have been proposing cuts to EPA for years and years and years.

Mr. Speaker, of all the rotten provisions tucked into this document—and I could go on and on and on—I find the most troubling to be the radical assault on people living in poverty.

You know, it is easy to sit in an office at OMB and concoct plans to throw people off of SNAP and off of Medicaid and kick them out of their housing. This plan does just that. By any reading, by any measure, that is what it does. We are reading about a $274 billion cut to our safety net, on top of the over $800 billion cut to Medicaid included in the TrumpCare bill.

These are real people, Mr. Speaker. They are our constituents. They are our neighbors and our friends. Our kids go to school together.

But given some of the proposals I have seen from this majority party, I have to wonder whether some of my colleagues might never have talked with anyone living in poverty. I would say to them, life is very different when you leave your country club. Life is very different. It is very hard for people struggling in poverty. Being poor in this country is hard work, and you ought to know that by now.

My Republican colleagues have made a habit of belittling the poor instead of trying to understand their struggles. They work hard, Mr. Speaker—often at more than one job—to put food on the table for their kids and to find a roof over their heads. They are exhausted from work and from worry.

We see them every day, serving tables, washing dishes, hauling away trash, cleaning offices, mowing lawns, stacking heavy loads, taking care of people's children, comforting the sick. Theirs are the faces in the bus windows going home from work at 2 in the morning. Theirs are the faces arriving at work at 5 in the morning the next day. They deserve our respect, not the disdain shown to them and to their families in this disgraceful budget.

I would like to remind my colleagues that poverty and hunger in rural areas is often as bad as, and sometimes even worse than, in cities. So I find it highly offensive that this budget slashes our safety net for the very people that President Trump promised to protect, the very people who put President Trump in office.

You know, I heard some of the rationale for this budget from the White House, saying: Well, you know, people who are on SNAP ought to work.

Well, let me just say for the RECORD so it is clear to everybody here that the majority of people on SNAP are children, are senior citizens, are people who are disabled. Of those who can work, a majority of them work. They work, but they earn so little that they are still stuck in poverty.

Why aren't we having a debate about increasing wages in this country? Why is the debate focused on how we make the lives of those in poverty even more miserable?

You know, budgets are moral documents, and this is the most heartless, reckless, and damaging plan I have ever seen. It is immoral.

The President's Budget Director talked yesterday about compassion for taxpayers and for Trump supporters. Well, give me a break. You know, I would tell Mr. Mulvaney I don't think that word means what he think it means.

Compassion, that is feeding starving children, helping a father get back on his feet after a job loss, helping a mother get back on her feet after a job loss, cleaning up poisoned water, ensuring everyone has a chance at living a healthy life regardless of how much money they have. That is compassion, not turning our backs on these people.

Tax cuts for the wealthiest among us at the expense of the public safety net is cruel. It is coldhearted and, Mr. Speaker, I am sick of it. I assure you that is not compassionate.

So I hope my Republican colleagues will have the courage to stand up against this administration and do what is right for the American people.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I would advise my friend from Massachusetts I do not have any speakers remaining, and I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Throughout his campaign, President Trump made promises that he would not cut Medicare, Medicaid, or Social Security. Now we have come to find out that he has broken every one of those promises.

The Trump budget includes more than $800 billion in Medicaid cuts in the GOP healthcare bill and then adds additional cuts on top of that, with total Medicaid cuts of over $1 trillion over the next 10 years.

Furthermore, the Trump budget guts Social Security disability insurance which, as of 2015, covered 10 million recipients.

The Trump budget also slashes funding for SNAP, our Nation's first line of defense against hunger, by $193 billion. That is a 25 percent cut. SNAP is the program that provides people food. That's it—food.

We have 42 million people in this country who are food insecure—42 million. We should all be ashamed of that. And the answer is to cut SNAP by 25 percent?

Oh, and by the way, the average SNAP benefit is $1.40 per person per meal.

And let's not forget that the Republicans' healthcare disaster takes $75 billion out of the Medicare trust fund, shortening the life of the trust fund.

Mr. WOODALL. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield to the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. WOODALL. I appreciate that. I would like to inquire of the Speaker: Is my friend from Massachusetts working on my yielded time or is he working on his time?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is on his own time.

Mr. WOODALL. I thank my friend.

Mr. MCGOVERN. If the gentleman wants to yield me some of his time, I am more than happy to go on for as long as you would like.

Mr. WOODALL. If my friend would yield, I was advised that I had yielded an abundance of time. I just wanted to make sure that I was not being more generous than you and I would have intended.

Mr. MCGOVERN. So, Mr. Speaker, it is disappointing that, instead of protecting our most vulnerable, President Trump and the House Republicans continually insist on tax breaks for big corporations and the wealthiest Americans.

Mr. Speaker, we need to hold President Trump to his word. Therefore, I am asking that we defeat the previous question. If we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule that would change the rules of the House to prevent any legislation from being considered if it would result in a reduction of guaranteed benefits under the Social Security Act, if it would increase either the early or full retirement age to receive Social Security benefits.

This would prevent any legislation from being considered if it would privatize Social Security. We would prevent any legislation from being considered that would result in a reduction of guaranteed benefits for individuals entitled to or enrolled for benefits under Medicare or result in a reduction of benefits or eligibility for individuals enrolled in or eligible to receive medical assistance through a State Medicaid plan or waiver.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Massachusetts?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would just simply say to my colleagues that I urge everybody in this House to remember why we came to Congress and who sent us here. Our primary obligation is to the people of this country, and they did not send us here to make their lives more miserable.

When you look at the priorities in the President's budget, when you look at the impact that the healthcare bill, the TrumpCare bill that the House of Representatives passed, when you look at the impact it is going to have on tens of millions of Americans in this country, these bills will devastate people.

So we need to get back to what is important. It is not about propping up the President during his difficulties. It is not about playing to the cheap seats at the Heritage Foundation or some other rightwing think tank. Our primary obligation is to people of the United States. This budget and the priorities of this Republican majority and the priorities of this President undercut the security and the economic well-being of every single person in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' to defeat the previous question and a ''no'' vote on the rule.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to recognize that, if you locked my friend from Massachusetts and me in a room together, it would be over both of our objections, but we would be able to solve about 50 percent of the challenges that face this country.

There is something different that happens in conversation and dialogue when the cameras are turned off than happens when the cameras are on, and of course we are going to keep these cameras here on the floor of the House for as long as you and I are here because the American people have a right to see and a right to know.

But just like Mom and Dad don't want to have all their conversations in front of the kids, and the kids certainly don't want to have all of their conversations in front of Mom and Dad, there is a role to be played for folks to be able to close the door and sit down and visit with each other and try to make things better.

My friend from Massachusetts is absolutely right. The only job that we have is to make a difference for our constituency back home. Sometimes we legitimately disagree on how to do that. The budget is a good example.

You will remember, Mr. Speaker, President Obama, in his 8 years as President of the United States, never once introduced a budget that balanced. He borrowed from our children and our grandchildren in every single budget.

And when I say he didn't introduce a budget that balanced, I don't mean that he didn't balance in year 1, I don't mean he didn't balance in year 10. I mean never, ever, ever looking forward in his budgets did he ever stop borrowing.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a man or woman in this institution who believes that you can run a country that way. There is not one. There is not a man or woman in this institution who doesn't understand that balancing budgets is going to mean hard decisions, and so it is absolutely the right place for the dialog about what those hard decisions should be.

But let us not be confused for one moment. There is no pathway to balance that isn't hard. Borrowing from your children and your grandchildren to pay for what you want today is always going to be easier, Mr. Speaker, than paying for it yourself. We are going to have to have that conversation.

I agree with my friend from Massachusetts. We do not work for the President of the United States in this institution. If anything, he works for us.

I sit on the House Budget Committee, Mr. Speaker, and I promise you, we are promulgating our own House budget, a work product that is going to make this institution proud. I am particularly pleased to be working with Budget Committee Chairwoman DIANE BLACK on that budget, even as we speak.

□ 1300

Mr. Speaker, it will balance by making commonsense changes to Federal programs, one of which is included in this bill here today.

Take the EPA, for example. Mr. Speaker, I encourage you, if you have not read the comments of our new EPA Administrator, to get into those because what he would tell you, which is absolutely true, is that we have Superfund sites in this country that are so polluted they cannot be utilized for other purposes.

They have been on the Superfund list for decades through Republican Presidents and through Democratic Presidents. They have been sitting on that list. There is no plan to clean them up, no plan to make a difference in those communities, and no plan to serve those constituencies. That is wrong.

Instead of spending its time and resources making a difference for families, making a difference for the environment, what is the EPA having to do?

Respond to court cases that tell it to treat the reasonable and labeled application of pesticides; not as spraying pesticides in your field, but as if you were operating a factory and just having as an effluent, pesticide flowing out of your factory. That is just nonsense.

The reason we produced pesticides is to spray it in fields. We do not need an effluent discharge permit as if we are running a factory, pumping it into our streams. We are not. We are spraying it on our plants to do what?

Address the food needs of this Nation.

My friend from Massachusetts is absolutely right when he talks about hunger in this Nation, Mr. Speaker. He is absolutely right. I dare say that there is not a community in this country that is not affected by hunger. But the biggest advocate we have in the fight against hunger is the American farmer, Mr. Speaker.

There is nobody in the world who does it better; there is nobody in the world who produces it cheaper; there is nobody in the world that has the capability of producing the food to go on the grocery store shelves in America except the American farmer. And these pesticides and herbicides make a difference in getting that food out of the field and onto those store shelves.

We want to do it with strict EPA regulation. That is what is lost in this debate. There is not one Member of this body that wants to repeal EPA regulation. We want to keep that EPA regulation. It is called FIFRA, that regulation that pesticides are regulated under. No one wants to change that at all.

All folks want to do is say: Wait a minute, this is not a factory discharge issue. This is a pesticide issue.

My friend from Massachusetts is absolutely right. I sit on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Mr. Speaker. We did not have a hearing or a markup on this bill, and it was absolutely referred to our committee.

Why, Mr. Speaker?

It was referred to our committee because we have jurisdiction over the Clean Water Act, but this has never been a Clean Water Act issue, except the courts tried to make it one. This has never been a Clean Water Act issue, except the litigants tried to make it one. So when we tried to fix the problem, we didn't waste a moment in the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee dealing with the Clean Water Act because this has never been a Clean Water Act issue. It is an ag issue, which is why it went through my friend of Massachusetts' Agriculture Committee.

Mr. Speaker, I don't begrudge anyone the job that they have to do in this institution. We have different constituencies. They ask different things of us.

We all have to come and do our work. But I will tell you what, Mr. Speaker, everything doesn't have to be an us-against-them battle. Sometimes it is just about us. Sometimes there is more that unites this country than divides this country, and that is okay. Sometimes we are able to work together on commonsense solutions, and that is okay.

Mr. Speaker, when this bill came to the House under suspension of the rules, again, that process that we use for things that are noncontroversial, my friend from Massachusetts supported it at that time. He supported it because it is good legislation that is going to make a difference for folks back home. It is going to make a difference in combating hunger in every jurisdiction across this Nation.

When this bill went through the Agriculture Committee, Mr. Speaker, there were no amendments offered. The Agriculture Committee is composed of Republicans and Democrats. It is a place where discussion takes place. It was the markup of this bill, which is when you go and try to amend it and make it better. Not one amendment was offered from either side.

Why?

Because we have discussed this issue, we have litigated this issue, and we have worked together on this issue, and it is a collaborative work product.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I would just say to the gentleman that a number of amendments that are germane were offered in the Rules Committee to protect the health and safety of women and children, and they were not made in order. So amendments were offered and they were blocked. I just point that out for the RECORD.

Mr. WOODALL. I thank my friend. He is absolutely right. When the experts on the Agriculture Committee considered this, when the folks who spend their entire careers on Capitol Hill working on pesticide and pesticide safety considered this, they had absolutely no amendments to offer whatsoever.

When it came to the Rules Committee and the entire House could offer amendments, folks absolutely offered amendments. The Rules Committee, on which the gentleman from Massachusetts and I serve, made two of those amendments in order. We rejected others. You heard my friend's opening statement, Mr. Speaker, that one of the amendments we rejected was to protect pregnant women.

Well, Mr. Speaker, for Pete's sake, I have served with these men and women in here. I have been in this body for 6 years. There is not one Member of this institution who doesn't care about pregnant women. There is not one Member of this institution who doesn't care about children. There is not one Member of this institution who doesn't care. What we do in this institution is care. And when my friend from Massachusetts supported this bill, when he supported this bill, there were no amendments along those lines.

When the gentleman supported this bill without the amendment dealing particularly with pregnant women and children, I don't believe for a moment the gentleman forgot about those pregnant women and children. I don't believe for a moment he decided he was going to punish pregnant women and children. I believe that he thought those protections were inherent in the base text, and he was right when he thought it, and he was right when he supported it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. WOODALL. I yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I would just say that the bill has changed over the years, and I voted against it in committee.

I guess the question is: If we are all in agreement that we want to protect women and children, what was the harm in making in order an amendment that would have done that?

It was perfectly germane, and the Rules Committee decided not to make it in order. I think that is a question that the gentleman hasn't answered.

I appreciate that all the people on the Agriculture Committee are experts, but you know what?

There are other people who know a lot about science, pesticides, and agriculture who were not on the committee. And just because a committee takes action—I mean, if that is the new rule now: if you are on the committee, you can't offer amendments. Well, that is an unfortunate new approach that the Republicans are taking.

Mr. WOODALL. Reclaiming my time, I will tell my friend two things that he already knows. Number one is we do accept amendments from the entire Congress. That is the purpose of the Rules Committee being in existence, and we have added two amendments to this bill for consideration.

When the gentleman supported it in the 112th Congress, we considered no other amendments. That is a change this time. We are going to do that. When it passed the last time we did a rule, no one offered any amendments. This is a change from that time. When we passed it in the Agriculture bill, no one offered any amendments. So it is a change this time. We absolutely are opening up the process more and more with every time the House considers this bill.

But I would also tell my friend something that we are going to have to grapple with as an institution, and that is that I don't need a Rules Committee if what we are going to do is make every amendment that comes to this institution in order.

The only reason we have a Rules Committee is to pick and choose. The only reason we have a Rules Committee is to set up a timetable on which we can debate and consider things in a reasonable manner. The only reason we have a Rules Committee is because we are not operating under unanimous consent as our friends in the Senate do, though we absolutely could. And I would refer him to my friend, DANIEL WEBSTER, who has some marvelous ideas about how we might do that.

But, Mr. Speaker, I think it is legitimate for folks back home to wonder what is going on in that United States House. They passed it in a bipartisan way once. They passed it in a bipartisan way twice. They passed it in a bipartisan way three times, and here it is on the floor today, and it is as if the sky is falling and going to open up and swallow everything that is good and decent about this land.

Why is that, Mr. Speaker? Why is that the conversation we are having today instead of the one we had not once, not twice, but three times about how we could use this legislation to improve the lives of citizens across this country?

Perhaps that is just the environment we are in. Perhaps that is just the cards we have been dealt in politics across America today, Mr. Speaker, but we have a chance together as an institution to stand up and say it does not have to be that way. We have a chance together to stand up and say that we can do better than those partisan shenanigans. We can get together on things that are going to make a difference, and the first opportunity you are going to have after this speech, Mr. Speaker, to do that, is in supporting the rule for this bill. The first opportunity we are going to have to do that is in supporting this rule, and then supporting the underlying legislation and sending it back to the Senate one more time. It is the right thing to do, Mr. Speaker, and we have the opportunity to do that together.

Mr. Speaker, I urge strong support for the rule and the underlying bill.

The material previously referred to by Mr. MCGOVERN is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO BE OFFERED TO H. RES. 348 BY MR. MCGOVERN

At the end of the resolution, add the following new section:

SEC. 2. Rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives is amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

RESTRICTIONS ON CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION THAT WOULD BREAK DONALD TRUMP'S PROMISE NOT TO CUT SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, OR MEDICAID

13. (a) It shall not be in order to consider a bill, joint resolution, motion, amendment, amendment between the Houses, or conference report which includes any provision described in paragraph (b).''

(b) A provision referred to in paragraph (a) is a provision which, if enacted into law, would result in any of the following:

(1) a reduction of guaranteed benefits scheduled under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.);

(2) an increase in either the early or full retirement age for the benefits described in paragraph (1);

(3) a privatization of Social Security;

(4) a reduction of guaranteed benefits for individuals entitled to, or enrolled for, benefits under the Medicare program under title XVIII of 18 such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); or

(5) a reduction of benefits or eligibility for individuals enrolled in, or eligible to receive medical assistance through, a State Medicaid plan or waiver under title XIX of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 5 et seq.).

(c) It shall not be in order to consider a rule or order that waives the application of paragraph (a). As disposition of any point of order under paragraph (a) or this paragraph (except a point of order against an amendment pursuant to paragraph (a)), the Chair shall put the question of consideration with respect to the measure, order, conference report, or rule as applicable. The question of consideration shall be debatable for 10 minutes by the Member initiating the point of order and for 10 minutes by an opponent, but shall otherwise be decided without intervening motion except one that the House adjourn.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Massachusetts will state his parliamentary inquiry.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Again, hearing the gentleman say that we all want to protect the lives of pregnant women and children, I just want to ask as an inquiry: Is the amendment by EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON that prohibits the discharge of toxins in such circumstances where they would be harmful to pregnant women, or could harm fetal, or early childhood development, which is perfectly germane, is that made in order? Is that part of the rule?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman is free to consult the Rules Committee report.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Well, I don't think it is. I would just simply say to the gentleman, if he wants more cooperation, then maybe we ought to open the process up, and actually listen to what the Democrats have to say too.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 229, nays 191, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 271]

YEAS—229

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gaetz
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NAYS—191

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones

Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—10

Black
Deutch
Hice, Jody B.
Huizenga
Johnson, Sam
Newhouse
Roybal-Allard
Simpson
Tiberi
Wasserman Schultz

□ 1333

Mr. CRIST and Mrs. DINGELL changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated against:

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted "nay" on rollcall No. 271.

MOMENT OF SILENCE IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE TERRORIST ATTACK IN MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

The SPEAKER. The Chair would ask that all present rise for a moment of silence.

The Chair asks that the House now observe a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack in Manchester, England.

Without objection, 5-minute voting will continue.

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 232, noes 189, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 272]

AYES—232

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Bergman
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Emmer
Estes (KS)
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gallagher
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guthrie
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins (LA)
Hill
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hudson
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Katko
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
Lewis (MN)
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Noem
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Posey
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce (CA)
Russell
Rutherford
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smucker
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOES—189

Adams
Aguilar
Barragán
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Correa
Courtney
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Esty (CT)
Evans
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Gonzalez (TX)
Gottheimer
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Hastings
Heck
Higgins (NY)
Himes
Hoyer
Huffman
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Pallone
Panetta
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rosen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Soto
Speier
Suozzi
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—9

Black
Deutch
Gaetz
Hice, Jody B.
Huizenga
Johnson, Sam
Newhouse
Tiberi
Wasserman Schultz

□ 1342

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

THE BUDGET MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 115–3)

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky) laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

On February 28, I spoke to a joint session of the Congress about what we need to do to begin a new chapter of American Greatness. I asked the Nation to look forward nine years and imagine the wonders we could achieve by America's 250th anniversary of our Independence if we set free the dreams of our people by removing the barriers holding back our economic growth.

This Budget's defining ambition is to unleash the dreams of the American people. This requires laying a new foundation for American Greatness.

Through streamlined Government, we will drive an economic boom that

raises incomes and expands job opportunities for all Americans. Faster economic growth, coupled with fiscal restraint, will enable us to fully fund our national priorities, balance our budget, and start to pay down our national debt.

Our moral commitment to replacing our current economic stagnation with faster economic growth rests on the following eight pillars of reform:

Health Reform. We need to enable Americans to buy the healthcare they need at a price they can afford. To this end, we must repeal Obamacare and its burdensome regulations and mandates, and replace it with a framework that restores choice and competition. This will lower the cost of care so that more Americans can get the medical attention they need. Additionally, Medicaid, which inadequately serves enrollees and taxpayers, must be reformed to allow States to manage their own programs, with continued financial support from the Federal Government.

Tax Reform and Simplification. We must reduce the tax burden on American workers and businesses, so that we can maximize incomes and economic growth. We must also simplify our tax system, so that individuals and businesses do not waste countless hours and resources simply paying their taxes.

Immigration Reform. We must reform immigration policy so that it serves our national interest. We will adopt commonsense proposals that protect American workers, reduce burdens on taxpayers and public resources, and focus Federal funds on underserved and disadvantaged citizens.

Reductions in Federal Spending. We must scrutinize every dollar the Federal Government spends. Just as families decide how to manage limited budgets, we must ensure the Federal Government spends precious taxpayer dollars only on our highest national priorities, and always in the most efficient, effective manner.

Regulatory Rollback. We must eliminate every outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective Federal regulation, and move aggressively to build regulatory frameworks that stimulate—rather than stagnate—job creation. Even for those regulations we must leave in place, we must strike every provision that is counterproductive, ineffective, or outdated.

American Energy Development. We must increase development of America's energy resources, strengthening our national security, lowering the price of electricity and transportation fuels, and driving down the cost of consumer goods so that every American individual and business has more money to save and invest. A consistent, long-term supply of lower-cost American energy brings with it a much larger economy, more jobs, and greater security for the American people.

Welfare Reform. We must reform our welfare system so that it does not discourage able-bodied adults from working, which takes away scarce resources from those in real need. Work must be the center of our social policy.

Education Reform. We need to return decisions regarding education back to the State and local levels, while advancing opportunities for parents and students to choose, from all available options, the school that best fits their needs to learn and succeed.

To unleash the power of American work and creativity—and drive opportunity and faster economic growth—we must reprioritize Federal spending so that it advances the safety and security of the American people.

This Budget, therefore, includes $639 billion for the Department of Defense—a $52 billion increase from the 2017 annualized continuing resolution level. This increase will be offset by targeted reductions elsewhere. This defense funding is vital to rebuilding, modernizing, and preparing our Armed Forces for the future so that our military remains the world's preeminent fighting force and we can continue to ensure peace through strength. This Budget also increases funding to take care of our great veterans, who have served their country with such honor and distinction.

The Budget also meets the need to materially increase funding for border security, immigration enforcement, and law enforcement at the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice. These funding increases will provide additional resources for a southern border wall, expanded detention capacity, and initiatives to reduce violent crime, as well as more immigration judges, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, and Border Patrol agents. The Budget also invests significant resources in efforts to combat opioid abuse.

In these dangerous times, our increased attention to public safety and national security sends a clear message to the world—a message of American strength and resolve. It follows through on my promise to focus on keeping Americans safe, keeping terrorists out of our Nation, and putting violent offenders behind bars.

As this Budget returns us to economic prosperity, it will also allow us to fund additional priorities, including infrastructure, student loan reform, and initiatives to help working families such as paid parental leave. We will champion the hardworking taxpayers who have been ignored for too long. Once we end our economic stagnation and return to robust growth, so many of our aspirations will be within reach.

It is now up to the Congress to act. I pledge my full cooperation in ending the economic malaise that has, for too long, crippled the dreams of our people. The time for small thinking is over. As we look forward to our 250th year, I am calling upon all Members of Congress to join me in striving to do big and bold and daring things for our Nation. We have it in our power to set free the dreams of our people. Let us begin.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 23, 2017*.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM ACT OF 2017

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1809) to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1809

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
Sec. 3. Application of amendments.

TITLE I—DECLARATION OF FINDINGS, PURPOSE, AND DEFINITIONS

Sec. 101. Findings.
Sec. 102. Purposes.
Sec. 103. Definitions.

TITLE II—JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

Sec. 201. Concentration of Federal efforts.
Sec. 202. Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
Sec. 203. Annual report.
Sec. 204. Allocation of funds.
Sec. 205. State plans.
Sec. 206. Repeal of juvenile delinquency prevention block grant program.
Sec. 207. Research and evaluation; statistical analyses; information dissemination.
Sec. 208. Training and technical assistance.
Sec. 209. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 210. Administrative authority.

TITLE III—INCENTIVE GRANTS FOR LOCAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Sec. 301. Short Title.
Sec. 302. Definitions.
Sec. 303. Duties and functions of the administrator.
Sec. 304. Grants for delinquency prevention programs.
Sec. 305. Grants for tribal delinquency prevention and response programs.
Sec. 306. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 307. Technical amendment.

TITLE IV—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 401. Evaluation by Government Accountability Office.
Sec. 402. Accountability and oversight.

SEC. 3. APPLICATION OF AMENDMENTS.

The amendments made by this Act shall not apply with respect to funds appropriated for any fiscal year that begins before the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE I—DECLARATION OF FINDINGS, PURPOSE, AND DEFINITIONS

SEC. 101. FINDINGS.

Section 101(a)(9) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5601(a)(9)) is amended by inserting '', including offenders who enter the juvenile justice system as the result of sexual abuse, exploitation, and trauma,'' after ''young juvenile offenders''.

SEC. 102. PURPOSES.

Section 102 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5602) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting '', tribal,'' after ''State'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting '', tribal,'' after ''State''; and

(B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(3) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

''(3) to assist State, tribal, and local governments in addressing juvenile crime through the provision of technical assistance, research, training, evaluation, and the dissemination of current and relevant information on effective and evidence-based programs and practices for combating juvenile delinquency; and''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) to support a continuum of evidence-based or promising programs (including delinquency prevention, intervention, mental health, behavioral health and substance abuse treatment, family services, and services for children exposed to violence) that are trauma informed, reflect the science of adolescent development, and are designed to meet the needs of at-risk youth and youth who come into contact with the justice system.''.

SEC. 103. DEFINITIONS.

Section 103 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5603) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (8)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)(ii), by adding ''or'' at the end;

(B) by striking subparagraph (C); and

(C) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (C);

(2) in paragraph (18)—

(A) by inserting ''for purposes of title II,'' before ''the term''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''that has a law enforcement function, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with the Attorney General;''.

(3) by amending paragraph (22) to read as follows:

''(22) the term 'jail or lockup for adults' means a secure facility that is used by a State, unit of local government, or law enforcement authority to detain or confine adult inmates;'';

(4) by amending paragraph (25) to read as follows:

''(25) the term 'sight or sound contact' means any physical, clear visual, or verbal contact that is not brief and inadvertent;'';

(5) by amending paragraph (26) to read as follows:

''(26) the term 'adult inmate'—

''(A) means an individual who—

''(i) has reached the age of full criminal responsibility under applicable State law; and

''(ii) has been arrested and is in custody for or awaiting trial on a criminal charge, or is convicted of a criminal offense; and

''(B) does not include an individual who—

''(i) at the time of the time of the offense, was younger than the maximum age at which a youth can be held in a juvenile facility under applicable State law; and

''(ii) was committed to the care and custody or supervision, including post-placement or parole supervision, of a juvenile correctional agency by a court of competent jurisdiction or by operation of applicable State law;'';

(6) in paragraph (28), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(7) in paragraph (29), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(8) by adding at the end the following:

''(30) the term 'core requirements'—

''(A) means the requirements described in paragraphs (11), (12), (13), and (15) of section 223(a); and

''(B) does not include the data collection requirements described in subparagraphs (A) through (K) of section 207(1);

''(31) the term 'chemical agent' means a spray or injection used to temporarily incapacitate a person, including oleoresin capsicum spray, tear gas, and 2-chlorobenzalmalononitrile gas;

''(32) the term 'isolation'—

''(A) means any instance in which a youth is confined alone for more than 10 minutes in a room or cell; and

''(B) does not include—

''(i) confinement during regularly scheduled sleeping hours;

''(ii) separation based on a treatment program approved by a licensed medical or mental health professional;

''(iii) confinement or separation that is requested by the youth; or

''(iv) the separation of the youth from a group in a nonlocked setting for the limited purpose of calming;

''(33) the term 'restraints' has the meaning given that term in section 591 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 290ii);

''(34) the term 'evidence-based' means a program or practice that—

''(A) is demonstrated to be effective when implemented with fidelity;

''(B) is based on a clearly articulated and empirically supported theory;

''(C) has measurable outcomes relevant to juvenile justice, including a detailed description of the outcomes produced in a particular population, whether urban or rural; and

''(D) has been scientifically tested and proven effective through randomized control studies or comparison group studies and with the ability to replicate and scale;

''(35) the term 'promising' means a program or practice that—

''(A) is demonstrated to be effective based on positive outcomes relevant to juvenile justice from 1 or more objective, independent, and scientifically valid evaluations, as documented in writing to the Administrator; and

''(B) will be evaluated through a well-designed and rigorous study, as described in paragraph (34)(D);

''(36) the term 'dangerous practice' means an act, procedure, or program that creates an unreasonable risk of physical injury, pain, or psychological harm to a juvenile subjected to the act, procedure, or program;

''(37) the term 'screening' means a brief process—

''(A) designed to identify youth who may have mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse, or other needs requiring immediate attention, intervention, and further evaluation; and

''(B) the purpose of which is to quickly identify a youth with possible mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse, or other needs in need of further assessment;

''(38) the term 'assessment' includes, at a minimum, an interview and review of available records and other pertinent information—

''(A) by an appropriately trained professional who is licensed or certified by the applicable State in the mental health, behavioral health, or substance abuse fields; and

''(B) which is designed to identify significant mental health, behavioral health, or substance abuse treatment needs to be addressed during a youth's confinement;

''(39) for purposes of section 223(a)(15), the term 'contact' means the points at which a youth and the juvenile justice system or criminal justice system officially intersect, including interactions with a juvenile justice, juvenile court, or law enforcement official;

''(40) the term 'trauma-informed' means—

''(A) understanding the impact that exposure to violence and trauma have on a youth's physical, psychological, and psychosocial development;

''(B) recognizing when a youth has been exposed to violence and trauma and is in need of help to recover from the adverse impacts of trauma; and

''(C) responding in ways that resist retraumatization;

''(41) the term 'racial and ethnic disparity' means minority youth populations are involved at a decision point in the juvenile justice system at higher rates, incrementally or cumulatively, than non-minority youth at that decision point;

''(42) the term 'status offender' means a juvenile who is charged with or who has committed an offense that would not be criminal if committed by an adult;

''(43) the term 'rural' means an area that is not located in a metropolitan statistical area, as defined by the Office of Management and Budget;

''(44) the term 'internal controls' means a process implemented to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives in—

''(A) effectiveness and efficiency of operations, such as grant management practices;

''(B) reliability of reporting for internal and external use; and

''(C) compliance with applicable laws and regulations, as well as recommendations of the Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office; and

''(45) the term 'tribal government' means the governing body of an Indian tribe.''.

TITLE II—JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

SEC. 201. CONCENTRATION OF FEDERAL EFFORTS.

Section 204 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5614) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), in the first sentence—

(i) by striking ''a long-term plan, and implement'' and inserting the following: ''a long-term plan to improve the juvenile justice system in the United States, taking into account scientific knowledge regarding adolescent development and behavior and regarding the effects of delinquency prevention programs and juvenile justice interventions on adolescents, and shall implement''; and

(ii) by striking ''research, and improvement of the juvenile justice system in the United States'' and inserting ''and research''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(B), by striking ''Federal Register'' and all that follows and inserting ''Federal Register during the 30-day period ending on October 1 of each year.''; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking paragraph (7);

(B) by redesignating paragraphs (5) and (6) as paragraphs (6) and (7), respectively;

(C) by inserting after paragraph (4), the following:

''(5) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, in consultation with Indian tribes, develop a policy for the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to collaborate with representatives of Indian tribes with a criminal justice function on the implementation of the provisions of this Act relating to Indian tribes;'';

(D) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated, by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(E) in paragraph (7), as so redesignated—

(i) by striking ''monitoring'';

(ii) by striking ''section 223(a)(15)'' and inserting ''section 223(a)(14)''; and

(iii) by striking ''to review the adequacy of such systems; and'' and inserting ''for monitoring compliance.''.

SEC. 202. COORDINATING COUNCIL ON JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION.

Section 206 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5616) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting ''the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use, the Secretary of the Interior,'' after ''the Secretary of Health and Human Services,''; and

(ii) by striking ''Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization'' and inserting ''Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''United States'' and inserting ''Federal Government''; and

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''paragraphs (12)(A), (13), and (14) of section 223(a) of this title'' and inserting ''the core requirements''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting '', on an annual basis'' after ''collectively''; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

''(B) not later than 120 days after the completion of the last meeting of the Council during any fiscal year, submit to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate a report that—

''(i) contains the recommendations described in subparagraph (A);

''(ii) includes a detailed account of the activities conducted by the Council during the fiscal year, including a complete detailed accounting of expenses incurred by the Council to conduct operations in accordance with this section;

''(iii) is published on the Web sites of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Council, and the Department of Justice; and

''(iv) is in addition to the annual report required under section 207.''.

SEC. 203. ANNUAL REPORT.

Section 207 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5617) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''a fiscal year'' and inserting ''each fiscal year'';

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and gender'' and inserting '', gender, and ethnicity, as such term is defined by the Bureau of the Census,'';

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (F)—

(i) by inserting ''and other'' before ''disabilities,''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(G) a summary of data from 1 month of the applicable fiscal year of the use of restraints and isolation upon juveniles held in the custody of secure detention and correctional facilities operated by a State or unit of local government;

''(H) the number of status offense cases petitioned to court, number of status offenders held in secure detention, the findings used to justify the use of secure detention, and the average period of time a status offender was held in secure detention;

''(I) the number of juveniles released from custody and the type of living arrangement to which they are released;

''(J) the number of juveniles whose offense originated on school grounds, during school-sponsored off-campus activities, or due to a referral by a school official, as collected and reported by the Department of Education or similar State educational agency; and

''(K) the number of juveniles in the custody of secure detention and correctional facilities operated by a State or unit of local government who report being pregnant.''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(5) A description of the criteria used to determine what programs qualify as evidence-based and promising programs under this title and title V and a comprehensive list of those programs the Administrator has determined meet such criteria in both rural and urban areas.

''(6) A description of funding provided to Indian tribes under this Act or for a juvenile delinquency or prevention program under the Tribal Law and Order Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–211; 124 Stat. 2261), including direct Federal grants and funding provided to Indian tribes through a State or unit of local government.

''(7) An analysis and evaluation of the internal controls at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to determine if grantees are following the requirements of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant programs and what remedial action the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention has taken to recover any grant funds that are expended in violation of the grant programs, including instances—

''(A) in which supporting documentation was not provided for cost reports;

''(B) where unauthorized expenditures occurred; or

''(C) where subrecipients of grant funds were not compliant with program requirements.

''(8) An analysis and evaluation of the total amount of payments made to grantees that the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention recouped from grantees that were found to be in violation of policies and procedures of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention grant programs, including—

''(A) the full name and location of the grantee;

''(B) the violation of the program found;

''(C) the amount of funds sought to be recouped by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and

''(D) the actual amount recouped by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.''.

SEC. 204. ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.

(a) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 221(b)(1) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5631(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''2 percent'' and inserting ''5 percent''.

(b) OTHER ALLOCATIONS.—Section 222 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5632) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''age eighteen'' and inserting ''18 years of age, based on the most recent data available from the Bureau of the Census''; and

(B) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting the following:

''(2)(A) If the aggregate amount appropriated for a fiscal year to carry out this title is less than $75,000,000, then—

''(i) the amount allocated to each State other than a State described in clause (ii) for that fiscal year shall be not less than $400,000; and

''(ii) the amount allocated to the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for that fiscal year shall be not less than $75,000.

''(B) If the aggregate amount appropriated for a fiscal year to carry out this title is not less than $75,000,000, then—

''(i) the amount allocated to each State other than a State described in clause (ii) for that fiscal year shall be not less than $600,000; and

''(ii) the amount allocated to the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for that fiscal year shall be not less than $100,000.'';

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''efficient administration, including monitoring, evaluation, and one full-time staff position'' and inserting ''effective and efficient administration of funds, including the designation of not less than 1 individual who shall coordinate efforts to achieve and sustain compliance with the core requirements and certify whether the State is in compliance with such requirements''; and

(3) in subsection (d), by striking ''5 per centum of the minimum'' and inserting ''not more than 5 percent of the''.

SEC. 205. STATE PLANS.

Section 223 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5633) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''and shall describe the status of compliance with State plan requirements.'' and inserting ''and shall describe how the State plan is supported by or takes account of scientific knowledge regarding adolescent development and behavior and regarding the effects of delinquency prevention programs and juvenile justice interventions on adolescents. Not later than 60 days after the date on which a plan or amended plan submitted under this subsection is finalized, a State shall make the plan or amended plan publicly available by posting the plan or amended plan on the State's publicly available website.'';

(B) in paragraph (1), by striking ''described in section 299(c)(1)'' and inserting ''as designated by the chief executive officer of the State'';

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clause (i), by inserting ''adolescent development,'' after ''concerning'';

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) in subclause (II), by inserting ''publicly supported court-appointed legal counsel with experience representing juveniles in delinquency proceedings,'' after ''youth,'';

(bb) in subclause (III), by striking ''mental health, education, special education'' and inserting ''child and adolescent mental health, education, child and adolescent substance

abuse, special education, services for youth with disabilities'';

(cc) in subclause (V), by striking ''delinquents or potential delinquents'' and inserting ''delinquent youth or youth at risk of delinquency'';

(dd) in subclause (VI), by striking ''youth workers involved with'' and inserting ''representatives of'';

(ee) in subclause (VII), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ff) by striking subclause (VIII) and inserting the following:

''(VIII) persons, licensed or certified by the applicable State, with expertise and competence in preventing and addressing mental health and substance abuse needs in delinquent youth and youth at risk of delinquency;

''(IX) representatives of victim or witness advocacy groups, including at least 1 individual with expertise in addressing the challenges of sexual abuse and exploitation and trauma, particularly the needs of youth who experience disproportionate levels of sexual abuse, exploitation, and trauma before entering the juvenile justice system; and

''(X) for a State in which 1 or more Indian tribes are located, an Indian tribal representative or other individual with significant expertise in tribal law enforcement and juvenile justice in Indian tribal communities;'';

(III) in clause (iv), by striking ''24 at the time of appointment'' and inserting ''28 at the time of initial appointment''; and

(IV) in clause (v) by inserting ''or, if not feasible and in appropriate circumstances, who is the parent or guardian of someone who has been or is currently under the jurisdiction of the juvenile justice system'' after ''juvenile justice system'';

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''30 days'' and inserting ''45 days''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (D)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(II) in clause (ii), by striking ''at least annually recommendations regarding State compliance with the requirements of paragraphs (11), (12), and (13)'' and inserting ''at least every 2 years a report and necessary recommendations regarding State compliance with the core requirements''; and

(iv) in subparagraph (E)—

(I) in clause (i), by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(II) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon;

(D) in paragraph (5)(C), by striking ''Indian tribes'' and all that follows through ''applicable to the detention and confinement of juveniles'' and inserting ''Indian tribes that agree to attempt to comply with the core requirements applicable to the detention and confinement of juveniles'';

(E) in paragraph (7)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''performs law enforcement functions'' and inserting ''has jurisdiction''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(II) by striking clause (iv) and inserting the following:

''(iv) a plan to provide alternatives to detention for status offenders, survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, and others, where appropriate, such as specialized or problem-solving courts or diversion to home-based or community-based services or treatment for those youth in need of mental health, substance abuse, or co-occurring disorder services at the time such juveniles first come into contact with the juvenile justice system;

''(v) a plan to reduce the number of children housed in secure detention and corrections facilities who are awaiting placement in residential treatment programs;

''(vi) a plan to engage family members, where appropriate, in the design and delivery of juvenile delinquency prevention and treatment services, particularly post-placement;

''(vii) a plan to use community-based services to respond to the needs of at-risk youth or youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system;

''(viii) a plan to promote evidence-based and trauma-informed programs and practices; and

''(ix) not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, a plan, which shall be implemented not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, to—

''(I) eliminate the use of restraints of known pregnant juveniles housed in secure juvenile detention and correction facilities, during labor, delivery, and post-partum recovery, unless credible, reasonable grounds exist to believe the detainee presents an immediate and serious threat of hurting herself, staff, or others; and

''(II) eliminate the use of abdominal restraints, leg and ankle restraints, wrist restraints behind the back, and four-point restraints on known pregnant juveniles, unless—

''(aa) credible, reasonable grounds exist to believe the detainee presents an immediate and serious threat of hurting herself, staff, or others; or

''(bb) reasonable grounds exist to believe the detainee presents an immediate and credible risk of escape that cannot be reasonably minimized through any other method;'';

(F) in paragraph (8), by striking ''existing'' and inserting ''evidence-based and promising'';

(G) in paragraph (9)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting '', with priority in funding given to entities meeting the criteria for evidence-based or promising programs'' after ''used for'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) in clause (i)—

(aa) by inserting ''status offenders and other'' before ''youth who need''; and

(bb) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(II) in clause (ii) by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(III) by inserting after clause (ii) the following:

''(iii) for youth who need specialized intensive and comprehensive services that address the unique issues encountered by youth when they become involved with gangs;'';

(iii) in subparagraph (B)(i)—

(I) by striking ''parents and other family members'' and inserting ''status offenders, other youth, and the parents and other family members of such offenders and youth''; and

(II) by striking ''be retained'' and inserting ''remain'';

(iv) in subparagraph (E)—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''delinquent'' and inserting ''at-risk or delinquent youth''; and

(II) in clause (i), by inserting '', including for truancy prevention and reduction'' before the semicolon;

(v) in subparagraph (F), in the matter preceding clause (i), by striking ''expanding'' and inserting ''programs to expand'';

(vi) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) through (S) as subparagraphs (H) through (T), respectively;

(vii) by inserting after subparagraph (F), the following:

''(G) programs—

''(i) to ensure youth have access to appropriate legal representation; and

''(ii) to expand access to publicly supported, court-appointed legal counsel who are trained to represent juveniles in adjudication proceedings,

except that the State may not use more than 2 percent of the funds received under section 222 for these purposes;'';

(viii) in subparagraph (H), as so redesignated, by striking ''State,'' each place the term appears and inserting ''State, tribal,'';

(ix) in subparagraph (M), as so redesignated—

(I) in clause (i)—

(aa) by inserting ''pre-adjudication and'' before ''post-adjudication'';

(bb) by striking ''restraints'' and inserting ''alternatives''; and

(cc) by inserting ''specialized or problem-solving courts,'' after ''(including''; and

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) by striking ''by the provision by the Administrator''; and

(bb) by striking ''to States'';

(x) in subparagraph (N), as redesignated—

(I) by inserting ''and reduce the risk of recidivism'' after ''families''; and

(II) by striking ''so that such juveniles may be retained in their homes'';

(xi) in subparagraph (S), as so redesignated, by striking ''and'' at the end;

(xii) in subparagraph (T), as so redesignated—

(I) by inserting ''or co-occurring disorder'' after ''mental health'';

(II) by inserting ''court-involved or'' before ''incarcerated'';

(III) by striking ''suspected to be'';

(IV) by striking ''and discharge plans'' and inserting ''provision of treatment, and development of discharge plans''; and

(V) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(xiii) by inserting after subparagraph (T) the following:

''(U) programs and projects designed—

''(i) to inform juveniles of the opportunity and process for sealing and expunging juvenile records; and

''(ii) to assist juveniles in pursuing juvenile record sealing and expungements for both adjudications and arrests not followed by adjudications;

except that the State may not use more than 2 percent of the funds received under section 222 for these purposes;

''(V) programs that address the needs of girls in or at risk of entering the juvenile justice system, including pregnant girls, young mothers, victims of sexual abuse, survivors of commercial sexual exploitation or domestic child sex trafficking, girls with disabilities, and girls of color, including girls who are members of an Indian tribe; and

''(W) monitoring for compliance with the core requirements and providing training and technical assistance on the core requirements to secure facilities;'';

(H) by striking paragraph (11) and inserting the following:

''(11)(A) in accordance with rules issued by the Administrator, provide that a juvenile shall not be placed in a secure detention facility or a secure correctional facility, if—

''(i) the juvenile is charged with or has committed an offense that would not be criminal if committed by an adult, excluding—

''(I) a juvenile who is charged with or has committed a violation of section 922(x)(2) of title 18, United States Code, or of a similar State law;

''(II) a juvenile who is charged with or has committed a violation of a valid court order issued and reviewed in accordance with paragraph (23); and

''(III) a juvenile who is held in accordance with the Interstate Compact on Juveniles as enacted by the State; or

''(ii) the juvenile—

''(I) is not charged with any offense; and

''(II)(aa) is an alien; or

''(bb) is alleged to be dependent, neglected, or abused; and

''(B) require that—

''(i) not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, unless a court finds, after a hearing and in writing, that it is in the interest of justice, juveniles awaiting trial or other legal process who are treated as adults for purposes of prosecution in criminal court and housed in a secure facility—

''(I) shall not have sight or sound contact with adult inmates; and

''(II) except as provided in paragraph (13), may not be held in any jail or lockup for adults;

''(ii) in determining under subparagraph (A) whether it is in the interest of justice to permit a juvenile to be held in any jail or lockup for adults, or have sight or sound contact with adult inmates, a court shall consider—

''(I) the age of the juvenile;

''(II) the physical and mental maturity of the juvenile;

''(III) the present mental state of the juvenile, including whether the juvenile presents an imminent risk of harm to the juvenile;

''(IV) the nature and circumstances of the alleged offense;

''(V) the juvenile's history of prior delinquent acts;

''(VI) the relative ability of the available adult and juvenile detention facilities to not only meet the specific needs of the juvenile but also to protect the safety of the public as well as other detained youth; and

''(VII) any other relevant factor; and

''(iii) if a court determines under subparagraph (A) that it is in the interest of justice to permit a juvenile to be held in any jail or lockup for adults—

''(I) the court shall hold a hearing not less frequently than once every 30 days, or in the case of a rural jurisdiction, not less frequently than once every 45 days, to review whether it is still in the interest of justice to permit the juvenile to be so held or have such sight or sound contact; and

''(II) the juvenile shall not be held in any jail or lockup for adults, or permitted to have sight or sound contact with adult inmates, for more than 180 days, unless the court, in writing, determines there is good cause for an extension or the juvenile expressly waives this limitation;''.

(I) in paragraph (12)(A), by striking ''contact'' and inserting ''sight or sound contact'';

(J) in paragraph (13), by striking ''contact'' each place it appears and inserting ''sight or sound contact'';

(K) in paragraph (14)—

(i) by striking ''adequate system'' and inserting ''effective system'';

(ii) by inserting ''lock-ups,'' after ''monitoring jails,'';

(iii) by inserting ''and'' after ''detention facilities,'';

(iv) by striking '', and non-secure facilities'';

(v) by striking ''insure'' and inserting ''ensure'';

(vi) by striking ''requirements of paragraphs (11), (12), and (13)'' and inserting ''core requirements''; and

(vii) by striking '', in the opinion of the Administrator,'';

(L) by striking paragraphs (22) and (27);

(M) by redesignating paragraph (28) as paragraph (27);

(N) by redesignating paragraphs (15) through (21) as paragraphs (16) through (22), respectively;

(O) by inserting after paragraph (14) the following:

''(15) implement policy, practice, and system improvement strategies at the State, territorial, local, and tribal levels, as applicable, to identify and reduce racial and ethnic disparities among youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system, without establishing or requiring numerical standards or quotas, by—

''(A) establishing or designating existing coordinating bodies, composed of juvenile justice stakeholders, (including representatives of the educational system) at the State, local, or tribal levels, to advise efforts by States, units of local government, and Indian tribes to reduce racial and ethnic disparities;

''(B) identifying and analyzing data on race and ethnicity at all decision points in State, local, or tribal juvenile justice systems to determine which key points create racial and ethnic disparities among youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system; and

''(C) developing and implementing a work plan that includes measurable objectives for policy, practice, or other system changes, based on the needs identified in the data collection and analysis under subparagraph (B);'';

(P) in paragraph (16), as so redesignated, by inserting ''ethnicity,'' after ''race,'';

(Q) in paragraph (21), as so redesignated, by striking ''local,'' each place the term appears and inserting ''local, tribal,'';

(R) in paragraph (23)—

(i) in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C), by striking ''juvenile'' each place it appears and inserting ''status offender'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in subparagraph (C)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(II) in clause (ii), by adding ''and'' at the end; and

(III) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) if such court determines the status offender should be placed in a secure detention facility or correctional facility for violating such order—

''(I) the court shall issue a written order that—

''(aa) identifies the valid court order that has been violated;

''(bb) specifies the factual basis for determining that there is reasonable cause to believe that the status offender has violated such order;

''(cc) includes findings of fact to support a determination that there is no appropriate less restrictive alternative available to placing the status offender in such a facility, with due consideration to the best interest of the juvenile;

''(dd) specifies the length of time, not to exceed 7 days, that the status offender may remain in a secure detention facility or correctional facility, and includes a plan for the status offender's release from such facility; and

''(ee) may not be renewed or extended; and

''(II) the court may not issue a second or subsequent order described in subclause (I) relating to a status offender unless the status offender violates a valid court order after the date on which the court issues an order described in subclause (I);''; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) there are procedures in place to ensure that any status offender held in a secure detention facility or correctional facility pursuant to a court order described in this paragraph does not remain in custody longer than 7 days or the length of time authorized by the court, whichever is shorter; and

''(E) not later than September 30, 2020 (with a 1-year extension for each additional fiscal year that a State can demonstrate hardship, as determined by the State, and submits in writing evidence of such hardship to the Administrator which shall be considered approved unless the Administrator justifies to the State in writing that the hardship does not qualify for an exemption), the State will eliminate the use of valid court orders to provide secure confinement of status offenders, except that juveniles may be held in secure confinement in accordance with the Interstate Compact for Juveniles if the judge issues a written order that—

''(i) specifies the factual basis to believe that the State has the authority to detain the juvenile under the terms of the Interstate Compact for Juveniles;

''(ii) includes findings of fact to support a determination that there is no appropriate less restrictive alternative available to placing the juvenile in such a facility, with due consideration to the best interest of the juvenile;

''(iii) specifies the length of time a juvenile may remain in secure confinement, not to exceed 15 days, and includes a plan for the return of the juvenile to the home State of the juvenile; and

''(iv) may not be renewed or extended;'';

(S) in paragraph (26)—

(i) by inserting ''and in accordance with confidentiality concerns,'' after ''maximum extent practicable,''; and

(ii) by striking the semicolon at the end and inserting the following: '', so as to provide for—

''(A) data in child abuse or neglect reports relating to juveniles entering the juvenile justice system with a prior reported history of arrest, court intake, probation and parole, juvenile detention, and corrections; and

''(B) a plan to use the data described in subparagraph (A) to provide necessary services for the treatment of such victims of child abuse or neglect;'';

(T) in paragraph (27), as so redesignated, by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(U) by adding at the end the following:

''(28) provide for the coordinated use of funds provided under this title with other Federal and State funds directed at juvenile delinquency prevention and intervention programs;

''(29) describe the policies, procedures, and training in effect for the staff of juvenile State correctional facilities to eliminate the use of dangerous practices, unreasonable restraints, and unreasonable isolation, including by developing effective behavior management techniques;

''(30) describe—

''(A) the evidence-based methods that will be used to conduct mental health and substance abuse screening, assessment, referral, and treatment for juveniles who—

''(i) request a screening;

''(ii) show signs of needing a screening; or

''(iii) are held for a period of more than 24 hours in a secure facility that provides for an initial screening; and

''(B) how the State will seek, to the extent practicable, to provide or arrange for mental health and substance abuse disorder treatment for juveniles determined to be in need of such treatment;

''(31) describe how reentry planning by the State for juveniles will include—

''(A) a written case plan based on an assessment of needs that includes—

''(i) the pre-release and post-release plans for the juveniles;

''(ii) the living arrangement to which the juveniles are to be discharged; and

''(iii) any other plans developed for the juveniles based on an individualized assessment; and

''(B) review processes;

''(32) provide an assurance that the agency of the State receiving funds under this title collaborates with the State educational agency receiving assistance under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.) to develop and implement a plan to ensure that, in order to support educational progress—

''(A) the student records of adjudicated juveniles, including electronic records if available, are transferred in a timely manner from the educational program in the juvenile detention or secure treatment facility to the educational or training program into which the juveniles will enroll;

''(B) the credits of adjudicated juveniles are transferred; and

''(C) adjudicated juveniles receive full or partial credit toward high school graduation for secondary school coursework satisfactorily completed before and during the period of time during which the juveniles are held in custody, regardless of the local educational agency or entity from which the credits were earned; and

''(33) describe policies and procedures to—

''(A) screen for, identify, and document in records of the State the identification of victims of domestic human trafficking, or those at risk of such trafficking, upon intake; and

''(B) divert youth described in subparagraph (A) to appropriate programs or services, to the extent practicable.'';

(2) by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

''(c)(1) If a State fails to comply with any of the core requirements in any fiscal year, then—

''(A) subject to subparagraph (B), the amount allocated to such State under section 222 for the subsequent fiscal year shall be reduced by not less than 20 percent for each core requirement with respect to which the failure occurs; and

''(B) the State shall be ineligible to receive any allocation under such section for such fiscal year unless—

''(i) the State agrees to expend 50 percent of the amount allocated to the State for such fiscal year to achieve compliance with any such core requirement with respect to which the State is in noncompliance; or

''(ii) the Administrator determines that the State—

''(I) has achieved substantial compliance with such applicable requirements with respect to which the State was not in compliance; and

''(II) has made, through appropriate executive or legislative action, an unequivocal commitment to achieving full compliance with such applicable requirements within a reasonable time.

''(2) Of the total amount of funds not allocated for a fiscal year under paragraph (1)—

''(A) 50 percent of the unallocated funds shall be reallocated under section 222 to States that have not failed to comply with the core requirements; and

''(B) 50 percent of the unallocated funds shall be used by the Administrator to provide additional training and technical assistance to States for the purpose of promoting compliance with the core requirements.'';

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) by striking ''described in paragraphs (11), (12), (13), and (22) of subsection (a)'' and inserting ''described in the core requirements''; and

(B) by striking ''the requirements under paragraphs (11), (12), (13), and (22) of subsection (a)'' and inserting ''the core requirements'';

(4) in subsection (f)(2)—

(A) by striking subparagraph (A); and

(B) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (E) as subparagraphs (A) through (D), respectively; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(g) COMPLIANCE DETERMINATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—For each fiscal year, the Administrator shall make a determination regarding whether each State receiving a grant under this title is in compliance or out of compliance with respect to each of the core requirements.

''(2) REPORTING.—The Administrator shall—

''(A) issue an annual public report—

''(i) describing any determination described in paragraph (1) made during the previous year, including a summary of the information on which the determination is based and the actions to be taken by the Administrator (including a description of any reduction imposed under subsection (c)); and

''(ii) for any such determination that a State is out of compliance with any of the core requirements, describing the basis for the determination; and

''(B) make the report described in subparagraph (A) available on a publicly available website.

''(3) DETERMINATIONS REQUIRED.—The Administrator may not—

''(A) determine that a State is 'not out of compliance', or issue any other determination not described in paragraph (1), with respect to any core requirement; or

''(B) otherwise fail to make the compliance determinations required under paragraph (1).''.

SEC. 206. REPEAL OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY PREVENTION BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM.

Part C of title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5651 et seq.) is repealed.

SEC. 207. RESEARCH AND EVALUATION; STATISTICAL ANALYSES; INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.

Section 251 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5661) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''plan and identify'' and inserting ''annually publish a plan to identify''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) by striking clause (iii) and inserting the following:

''(iii) successful efforts to prevent status offenders and first-time minor offenders from subsequent involvement with the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems;'';

(II) by striking clause (vii) and inserting the following:

''(vii) the prevalence and duration of behavioral health needs (including mental health, substance abuse, and co-occurring disorders) among juveniles pre-placement and post-placement in the juvenile justice system, including an examination of the effects of secure confinement;'';

(III) by redesignating clauses (ix), (x), and (xi) as clauses (xvi), (xvii), and (xviii), respectively; and

(IV) by inserting after clause (viii) the following:

''(ix) training efforts and reforms that have produced reductions in or elimination of the use of dangerous practices;

''(x) methods to improve the recruitment, selection, training, and retention of professional personnel who are focused on the prevention, identification, and treatment of delinquency;

''(xi) methods to improve the identification and response to victims of domestic child sex trafficking within the juvenile justice system;

''(xii) identifying positive outcome measures, such as attainment of employment and educational degrees, that States and units of local government should use to evaluate the success of programs aimed at reducing recidivism of youth who have come in contact with the juvenile justice system or criminal justice system;

''(xiii) evaluating the impact and outcomes of the prosecution and sentencing of juveniles as adults;

''(xiv) evaluating the impact of fines, fees, and other costs assessed by the juvenile justice system on the long-term disposition of status offenders and other juveniles;

''(xv) successful and cost-effective efforts by States and units of local government to reduce recidivism through policies that provide for consideration of appropriate alternative sanctions to incarceration of youth facing nonviolent charges, while ensuring that public safety is preserved;''; and

(B) in paragraph (4)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking ''date of enactment of this paragraph, the'' and inserting ''date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, the''; and

(II) by inserting ''in accordance with relevant confidentiality requirements'' after ''wards of the State''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (D), by inserting ''and Indian tribes'' after ''State'';

(iii) in subparagraph (F), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iv) in subparagraph (G), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(H) a description of the best practices in discharge planning; and

''(I) an assessment of living arrangements for juveniles who, upon release from confinement in a State correctional facility, cannot return to the residence they occupied prior to such confinement.'';

(2) in subsection (b), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''may'' and inserting ''shall''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(f) NATIONAL RECIDIVISM MEASURE.—The Administrator, in accordance with applicable confidentiality requirements and in consultation with experts in the field of juvenile justice research, recidivism, and data collection, shall—

''(1) establish a uniform method of data collection and technology that States may use to evaluate data on juvenile recidivism on an annual basis;

''(2) establish a common national juvenile recidivism measurement system; and

''(3) make cumulative juvenile recidivism data that is collected from States available to the public.''.

SEC. 208. TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

Section 252 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5662) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''may'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting ''shall'' before ''develop and carry out projects''; and

(ii) by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting ''may'' before ''make grants to and contracts with''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) shall provide periodic training for States regarding implementation of the core requirements, current protocols and best practices for achieving and monitoring compliance, and information sharing regarding relevant Office resources on evidence-based and promising programs or practices that promote the purposes of this Act.'';

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''may'';

(B) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by inserting ''shall'' before ''develop and implement projects'';

(ii) by inserting '', including compliance with the core requirements'' after ''this title''; and

(iii) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting ''may'' before ''make grants to and contracts with''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) shall provide technical assistance to States and units of local government on achieving compliance with the amendments to the core requirements and State Plans made by the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, including training and technical assistance and, when appropriate, pilot or demonstration projects intended to develop and replicate best practices for achieving sight and sound separation in facilities or portions of facilities that are open and available to the general public and that may or may not contain a jail or a lock-up; and

''(4) shall provide technical assistance to States in support of efforts to establish partnerships between a State and a university, institution of higher education, or research center designed to improve the recruitment, selection, training, and retention of professional personnel in the fields of medicine, law enforcement, the judiciary, juvenile justice, social work and child protection, education, and other relevant fields who are engaged in, or intend to work in, the field of prevention, identification, and treatment of delinquency.'';

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) by inserting ''prosecutors,'' after ''public defenders,''; and

(B) by inserting ''status offenders and'' after ''needs of''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(d) BEST PRACTICES REGARDING LEGAL REPRESENTATION OF CHILDREN.—In consultation with experts in the field of juvenile defense, the Administrator shall—

''(1) share best practices, which may include sharing standards of practice developed by recognized entities in the profession, for attorneys representing children; and

''(2) provide a State, if it so requests, technical assistance to implement any of the best practices shared under paragraph (1).

''(e) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL AND STATE JUVENILE DETENTION AND CORRECTIONS PERSONNEL.—The Administrator shall coordinate training and technical assistance programs with juvenile detention and corrections personnel of States and units of local government—

''(1) to promote methods for improving conditions of juvenile confinement, including methods that are designed to minimize the use of dangerous practices, unreasonable restraints, and isolation and methods responsive to cultural differences; and

''(2) to encourage alternative behavior management techniques based on positive youth development approaches, which may include policies and procedures to train personnel to be culturally competent.

''(f) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT INCLUDING HOME-BASED OR COMMUNITY-BASED CARE.—The Administrator shall provide training and technical assistance, in conjunction with the appropriate public agencies, to individuals involved in making decisions regarding the disposition and management of cases for youth who enter the juvenile justice system about the appropriate services and placement for youth with mental health or substance abuse needs, including—

''(1) juvenile justice intake personnel;

''(2) probation officers;

''(3) juvenile court judges and court services personnel;

''(4) prosecutors and court-appointed counsel; and

''(5) family members of juveniles and family advocates.

''(g) TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT JUVENILE COURT JUDGES AND PERSONNEL.—The Attorney General, acting through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Office of Justice Programs, shall provide training and technical assistance, in conjunction with the appropriate public agencies, to enhance the capacity of State and local courts, judges, and related judicial personnel to—

''(1) improve the lives of children currently involved in or at risk of being involved in the juvenile court system; and

''(2) carry out the requirements of this Act.

''(h) FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL LUNCHES FOR INCARCERATED JUVENILES.—The Attorney General, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, shall provide guidance to States relating to existing options for school food authorities in the States to apply for reimbursement for free or reduced price lunches under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) for juveniles who are incarcerated and would, if not incarcerated, be eligible for free or reduced price lunches under that Act.''.

SEC. 209. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 299 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5671) is amended—

(1) by striking subsections (b) and (c), and redesignating subsection (d) as subsection (b);

(2) in subsection (a)—

(A) in the heading, by striking ''(EXCLUDING PARTS C AND E)'';

(B) by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title—

''(A) $76,125,000 for fiscal year 2018;

''(B) $76,125,000 for fiscal year 2019;

''(C) $77,266,875 for fiscal year 2020;

''(D) $78,425,878 for fiscal year 2021; and

''(E) $79,602,266 for fiscal year 2022.''; and

(C) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''(other than parts C and E)''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''part D'' and inserting ''parts D and E''.

SEC. 210. ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY.

Section 299A of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5672) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''The Administrator'';

(B) by striking '', after appropriate consultation with representatives of States and units of local government,'';

(C) by inserting ''guidance,'' after ''regulations,''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following: ''In developing guidance and procedures, the Administrator shall consult with representatives of States and units of local government, including those individuals responsible for administration of this Act and compliance with the core requirements.

''(2) The Administrator shall ensure that—

''(A) reporting, compliance reporting, State plan requirements, and other similar documentation as may be required from States is requested in a manner that respects confidentiality, encourages efficiency and reduces the duplication of reporting efforts; and

''(B) States meeting all the core requirements are encouraged to experiment with offering innovative, data-driven programs designed to further improve the juvenile justice system.''; and

(2) in subsection (e), by striking ''requirements described in paragraphs (11), (12), and (13) of section 223(a)'' and inserting ''core requirements''.

TITLE III—INCENTIVE GRANTS FOR LOCAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS

SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE.

Section 501 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 5601 note) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''Youth Promise'' before ''Incentive Grants''; and

(2) by striking ''2002'' and inserting ''2017''.

SEC. 302. DEFINITIONS.

Section 502 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 5781) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 502. DEFINITIONS.

''In this title—

''(1) the term 'at-risk' has the meaning given that term in section 1432 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6472);

''(2) the term 'eligible entity' means—

''(A) a unit of local government that is in compliance with the requirements of part B of title II; or

''(B) a nonprofit organization in partnership with a unit of local government described in subparagraph (A);

''(3) the term 'delinquency prevention program' means a delinquency prevention program that is evidence-based or promising and that may include—

''(A) alcohol and substance abuse prevention or treatment services;

''(B) tutoring and remedial education, especially in reading and mathematics;

''(C) child and adolescent health and mental health services;

''(D) recreation services;

''(E) leadership and youth development activities;

''(F) the teaching that individuals are and should be held accountable for their actions;

''(G) assistance in the development of job training skills;

''(H) youth mentoring programs;

''(I) after-school programs;

''(J) coordination of a continuum of services, which may include—

''(i) early childhood development services;

''(ii) voluntary home visiting programs;

''(iii) nurse-family partnership programs;

''(iv) parenting skills training;

''(v) child abuse prevention programs;

''(vi) family stabilization programs;

''(vii) child welfare services;

''(viii) family violence intervention programs;

''(ix) adoption assistance programs;

''(x) emergency, transitional and permanent housing assistance;

''(xi) job placement and retention training;

''(xii) summer jobs programs;

''(xiii) alternative school resources for youth who have dropped out of school or demonstrate chronic truancy;

''(xiv) conflict resolution skill training;

''(xv) restorative justice programs;

''(xvi) mentoring programs;

''(xvii) targeted gang prevention, intervention and exit services;

''(xviii) training and education programs for pregnant teens and teen parents; and

''(xix) pre-release, post-release, and reentry services to assist detained and incarcerated youth with transitioning back into and reentering the community; and

''(K) other data-driven evidence-based or promising prevention programs;

''(4) the term 'local policy board', when used with respect to an eligible entity, means a policy board that the eligible entity will engage in the development of the eligible entity's plan described in section 504(e)(5), and that includes—

''(A) not fewer than 15 and not more than 21 members; and

''(B) a balanced representation of—

''(i) public agencies and private nonprofit organizations serving juveniles and their families; and

''(ii) business and industry;

''(C) at least one representative of the faith community, one adjudicated youth, and one parent of an adjudicated youth; and

''(D) in the case of an eligible entity described in paragraph (1)(B), a representative of the nonprofit organization of the eligible entity;

''(5) the term 'mentoring' means matching 1 adult with 1 or more youths for the purpose of providing guidance, support, and encouragement through regularly scheduled meetings for not less than 9 months;

''(6) the term 'State advisory group' means the advisory group appointed by the chief executive officer of a State under a plan described in section 223(a); and

''(7) the term 'State entity' means the State agency designated under section 223(a)(1) or the entity receiving funds under section 223(d).''.

SEC. 303. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.

Section 503 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 5782) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (1); and

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through (4) as paragraphs (1) through (3), respectively.

SEC. 304. GRANTS FOR DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

Section 504 of the Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 5781 et seq.) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 504. GRANTS FOR LOCAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION PROGRAMS.

''(a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this section is to enable local communities to address the unmet needs of at-risk or delinquent youth, including through a continuum of delinquency prevention programs for juveniles who have had contact with the juvenile justice system or who are likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system.

''(b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator shall—

''(1) for each fiscal year for which less than $25,000,000 is appropriated under section 506, award grants to not fewer than 3 State entities, but not more than 5 State entities, that apply under subsection (c) and meet the requirements of subsection (d); or

''(2) for each fiscal year for which $25,000,000 or more is appropriated under section 506, award grants to not fewer than 5 State entities that apply under subsection (c) and meet the requirements of subsection (d).

''(c) STATE APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, a State entity shall submit an application to the Administrator, which includes the following:

''(1) An assurance the State entity will use—

''(A) not more than 10 percent of such grant, in the aggregate—

''(i) for the costs incurred by the State entity to carry out this section, except that not more than 3 percent of such grant may be used for such costs; and

''(ii) to provide technical assistance to eligible entities receiving a subgrant under subsection (e) in carrying out delinquency prevention programs under the subgrant; and

''(B) the remainder of such grant to award subgrants to eligible entities under subsection (e).

''(2) An assurance that such grant will supplement, and not supplant, State and local efforts to prevent juvenile delinquency.

''(3) An assurance the State entity will evaluate the capacity of eligible entities receiving a subgrant under subsection (e) to fulfill the requirements under such subsection.

''(4) An assurance that such application was prepared after consultation with, and participation by, the State advisory group, units of local government, community-based organizations, and organizations that carry out programs, projects, or activities to prevent juvenile delinquency in the local juvenile justice system served by the State entity.

''(d) APPROVAL OF STATE APPLICATIONS.—In awarding grants under this section for a fiscal year, the Administrator may not award a grant to a State entity for a fiscal year unless—

''(1)(A) the State that will be served by the State entity submitted a plan under section 223 for such fiscal year; and

''(B) such plan is approved by the Administrator for such fiscal year; or

''(2) after finding good cause for a waiver, the Administrator waives the plan required under subparagraph (A) for such State for such fiscal year.

''(e) SUBGRANT PROGRAM.—

''(1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each State entity receiving a grant under this section shall award subgrants to eligible entities in accordance with this subsection.

''(B) PRIORITY.—In awarding subgrants under this subsection, the State entity shall give priority to eligible entities that demonstrate ability in—

''(i) plans for service and agency coordination and collaboration including the collocation of services;

''(ii) innovative ways to involve the private nonprofit and business sector in delinquency prevention activities;

''(iii) developing data-driven prevention plans, employing evidence-based prevention strategies, and conducting program evaluations to determine impact and effectiveness;

''(iv) identifying under the plan submitted under paragraph (5) potential savings and efficiencies associated with successful implementation of such plan; and

''(v) describing how such savings and efficiencies may be used to carry out delinquency prevention programs and be reinvested in the continuing implementation of such programs after the end of the subgrant period.

''(C) SUBGRANT PROGRAM PERIOD AND DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS.—

''(i) PROGRAM PERIOD.—A subgrant awarded to an eligible entity by a State entity under this section shall be for a period of not more than 5 years, of which the eligible entity—

''(I) may use not more than 18 months for completing the plan submitted by the eligible entity under paragraph (5); and

''(II) shall use the remainder of the subgrant period, after planning period described in subclause (I), for the implementation of such plan.

''(ii) DIVERSITY OF PROJECTS.—In awarding subgrants under this subsection, a State entity shall ensure, to the extent practicable and applicable, that such subgrants are distributed throughout different areas, including urban, suburban, and rural areas.

''(2) LOCAL APPLICATION.—An eligible entity that desires a subgrant under this subsection shall submit an application to the State entity in the State of the eligible entity, at such time and in such manner as determined by the State entity, and that includes—

''(A) a description of—

''(i) the local policy board and local partners the eligible entity will engage in the development of the plan described in paragraph (5);

''(ii) the unmet needs of at-risk or delinquent youth in the community;

''(iii) available resources in the community to meet the unmet needs identified in the needs assessment described in paragraph (5)(A);

''(iv) potential costs to the community if the unmet needs are not addressed;

''(B) a specific time period for the planning and subsequent implementation of its continuum of local delinquency prevention programs;

''(C) the steps the eligible entity will take to implement the plan under subparagraph (A); and

''(D) a plan to continue the grant activity with non-Federal funds, if proven successful according to the performance evaluation process under paragraph (5)(D), after the grant period.

''(3) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—An eligible entity desiring a subgrant under this subsection shall agree to provide a 50 percent match of the amount of the subgrant, which may include the value of in-kind contributions.

''(4) SUBGRANT REVIEW.—

''(A) REVIEW.—Not later than the end of the second year of a subgrant period for a subgrant awarded to an eligible entity under this subsection and before awarding the remaining amount of the subgrant to the eligible entity, the State entity shall—

''(i) ensure that the eligible entity has completed the plan submitted under paragraph (2) and that the plan meets the requirements of such paragraph; and

''(ii) verify that the eligible entity will begin the implementation of its plan upon receiving the next installment of its subgrant award.

''(B) TERMINATION.—If the State entity finds through the review conducted under subparagraph (A) that the eligible entity has not met the requirements of clause (i) of such subparagraph, the State entity shall reallocate the amount remaining on the subgrant of the eligible entity to other eligible entities receiving a subgrant under this subsection or award the amount to an eligible entity during the next subgrant competition under this subsection.

''(5) LOCAL USES OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity that receives a subgrant under this subsection shall use the funds to implement a plan to carry out delinquency prevention programs in the community served by the eligible entity in a coordinated manner with other delinquency prevention programs or entities serving such community, which includes—

''(A) an analysis of the unmet needs of at-risk or delinquent youth in the community—

''(i) which shall include—

''(I) the available resources in the community to meet the unmet needs; and

''(II) factors present in the community that may contribute to delinquency, such as

homelessness, food insecurity, teen pregnancy, youth unemployment, family instability, lack of educational opportunity; and

''(ii) may include an estimate—

''(I) for the most recent year for which reliable data is available, the amount expended by the community and other entities for delinquency adjudication for juveniles and the incarceration of adult offenders for offenses committed in such community; and

''(II) of potential savings and efficiencies that may be achieved through the implementation of the plan;

''(B) a minimum 3-year comprehensive strategy to address the unmet needs and an estimate of the amount or percentage of non-Federal funds that are available to carry out the strategy;

''(C) a description of how delinquency prevention programs under the plan will be coordinated;

''(D) a description of the performance evaluation process of the delinquency prevention programs to be implemented under the plan, which shall include performance measures to assess efforts to address the unmet needs of youth in the community analyzed under subparagraph (A);

''(E) the evidence or promising evaluation on which such delinquency prevention programs are based; and

''(F) if such delinquency prevention programs are proven successful according to the performance evaluation process under subparagraph (D), a strategy to continue such programs after the subgrant period with non-Federal funds, including a description of how any estimated savings or efficiencies created by the implementation of the plan may be used to continue such programs.''.

SEC. 305. GRANTS FOR TRIBAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS.

The Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Programs Act of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 5781 et seq.) is amended by redesignating section 505 as section 506 and by inserting after section 504 the following:

''SEC. 505. GRANTS FOR TRIBAL DELINQUENCY PREVENTION AND RESPONSE PROGRAMS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall make grants under this section, on a competitive basis, to eligible Indian tribes (or consortia of Indian tribes) as described in subsection (b)—

''(1) to support and enhance—

''(A) tribal juvenile delinquency prevention services; and

''(B) the ability of Indian tribes to respond to, and care for, at-risk or delinquent youth upon release; and

''(2) to encourage accountability of Indian tribal governments with respect to preventing juvenile delinquency, and responding to, and caring for, juvenile offenders.

''(b) ELIGIBLE INDIAN TRIBES.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this section, an Indian tribe or consortium of Indian tribes shall submit to the Administrator an application in such form as the Administrator may require.

''(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—In providing grants under this section, the Administrator shall take into consideration, with respect to the Indian tribe to be served, the—

''(1) juvenile delinquency rates;

''(2) school dropout rates; and

''(3) number of youth at risk of delinquency.

''(d) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—Of the amount available for a fiscal year to carry out this title, 11 percent shall be available to carry out this section.''.

SEC. 306. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 506, as redesignated by section 305, is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 506. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

''There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this title—

''(1) $91,857,500 for fiscal year 2018;

''(2) $91,857,500 for fiscal year 2019;

''(3) $93,235,362 for fiscal year 2020;

''(4) $94,633,892 for fiscal year 2021; and

''(5) $96,053,401 for fiscal year 2022.''.

SEC. 307. TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.

Title V of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 as enacted by Public Law 93-415 (88 Stat. 1133) (relating to miscellaneous and conforming amendments) is repealed.

TITLE IV—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SEC. 401. EVALUATION BY GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a comprehensive analysis and evaluation regarding the performance of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (referred to in this section as ''the agency''), its functions, its programs, and its grants;

(2) conduct a comprehensive audit and evaluation of a selected, sample of grantees (as determined by the Comptroller General) that receive Federal funds under grant programs administered by the agency including a review of internal controls (as defined in section 103 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5603), as amended by this Act) to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of funds by grantees; and

(3) submit a report in accordance with subsection (d).

(b) CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATION.—In conducting the analysis and evaluation under subsection (a)(1), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5601 et seq.), excluding the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.) and the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5771 et seq.), the Comptroller General shall take into consideration—

(1) the outcome and results of the programs carried out by the agency and those programs administered through grants by the agency;

(2) the extent to which the agency has complied with the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 (Public Law 103–62; 107 Stat. 285);

(3) the extent to which the jurisdiction of, and the programs administered by, the agency duplicate or conflict with the jurisdiction and programs of other agencies;

(4) the potential benefits of consolidating programs administered by the agency with similar or duplicative programs of other agencies, and the potential for consolidating those programs;

(5) whether less restrictive or alternative methods exist to carry out the functions of the agency and whether current functions or operations are impeded or enhanced by existing statutes, rules, and procedures;

(6) the number and types of beneficiaries or persons served by programs carried out by the agency;

(7) the manner with which the agency seeks public input and input from State and local governments on the performance of the functions of the agency;

(8) the extent to which the agency complies with section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the Freedom of Information Act);

(9) whether greater oversight is needed of programs developed with grants made by the agency; and

(10) the extent to which changes are necessary in the authorizing statutes of the agency in order for the functions of the agency to be performed in a more efficient and effective manner.

(c) CONSIDERATIONS FOR AUDITS.—In conducting the audit and evaluation under subsection (a)(2), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5601 et seq.), excluding the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.) and the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5771 et seq.), the Comptroller General shall take into consideration—

(1) whether grantees timely file Financial Status Reports;

(2) whether grantees have sufficient internal controls to ensure adequate oversight of grant fund received;

(3) whether disbursements were accompanied with adequate supporting documentation (including invoices and receipts);

(4) whether expenditures were authorized;

(5) whether subrecipients of grant funds were complying with program requirements;

(6) whether salaries and fringe benefits of personnel were adequately supported by documentation;

(7) whether contracts were bid in accordance with program guidelines; and

(8) whether grant funds were spent in accordance with program goals and guidelines.

(d) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(A) submit a report regarding the evaluation conducted under subsection (a) and audit under subsection (b), to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate; and

(B) make the report described in subparagraph (A) available to the public.

(2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted in accordance with paragraph (1) shall include all audit findings determined by the selected, statistically significant sample of grantees as required by subsection (a)(2) and shall include the name and location of any selected grantee as well as any findings required by subsection (a)(2).

SEC. 402. ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5601 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''TITLE VI—ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT

''SEC. 601. ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT.

''(a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that, in order to ensure that at-risk youth, and youth who come into contact with the juvenile justice system or the criminal justice system, are treated fairly and that the outcome of that contact is beneficial to the Nation—

''(1) the Department of Justice, through its Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, must restore meaningful enforcement of the core requirements in title II; and

''(2) States, which are entrusted with a fiscal stewardship role if they accept funds under title II must exercise vigilant oversight to ensure full compliance with the core requirements for juveniles provided for in title II.

''(b) ACCOUNTABILITY.—

''(1) AGENCY PROGRAM REVIEW.—

''(A) PROGRAMMATIC AND FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, the Director of the Office of Audit, Assessment, and Management of the Office of Justice Programs at

the Department of Justice (referred to in this section as the 'Director') shall—

''(I) conduct a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the internal controls of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (referred to in this section as the 'agency') to determine if States and Indian tribes receiving grants are following the requirements of the agency grant programs and what remedial action the agency has taken to recover any grant funds that are expended in violation of grant programs, including instances where—

''(aa) supporting documentation was not provided for cost reports;

''(bb) unauthorized expenditures occurred; and

''(cc) subrecipients of grant funds were not in compliance with program requirements;

''(II) conduct a comprehensive audit and evaluation of a selected statistically significant sample of States and Indian tribes (as determined by the Director) that have received Federal funds under title II, including a review of internal controls to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse of funds by grantees; and

''(III) submit a report in accordance with clause (iv).

''(ii) CONSIDERATIONS FOR EVALUATIONS.—In conducting the analysis and evaluation under clause (i)(I), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of titles II and V, the Director shall take into consideration the extent to which—

''(I) greater oversight is needed of programs developed with grants made by the agency;

''(II) changes are necessary in the authorizing statutes of the agency in order that the functions of the agency can be performed in a more efficient and effective manner; and

''(III) the agency has implemented recommendations issued by the Comptroller General or Office of Inspector General relating to the grant making and grant monitoring responsibilities of the agency.

''(iii) CONSIDERATIONS FOR AUDITS.—In conducting the audit and evaluation under clause (i)(II), and in order to document the efficiency and public benefit of titles II and V, the Director shall take into consideration—

''(I) whether grantees timely file Financial Status Reports;

''(II) whether grantees have sufficient internal controls to ensure adequate oversight of grant funds received;

''(III) whether grantees' assertions of compliance with the core requirements were accompanied with adequate supporting documentation;

''(IV) whether expenditures were authorized;

''(V) whether subrecipients of grant funds were complying with program requirements; and

''(VI) whether grant funds were spent in accordance with the program goals and guidelines.

''(iv) REPORT.—The Director shall—

''(I) submit to the Congress a report outlining the results of the analysis, evaluation, and audit conducted under clause (i), including supporting materials, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President pro tempore of the Senate; and

''(II) shall make such report available to the public online, not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section.

''(B) ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL CONTROLS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, the Administrator shall initiate a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the internal controls of the agency to determine whether, and to what extent, States and Indian tribes that receive grants under titles II and V are following the requirements of the grant programs authorized under titles II and V.

''(ii) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report containing—

''(I) the findings of the analysis and evaluation conducted under clause (i);

''(II) a description of remedial actions, if any, that will be taken by the Administrator to enhance the internal controls of the agency and recoup funds that may have been expended in violation of law, regulations, or program requirements issued under titles II and V; and

''(III) a description of—

''(aa) the analysis conducted under clause (i);

''(bb) whether the funds awarded under titles II and V have been used in accordance with law, regulations, program guidance, and applicable plans; and

''(cc) the extent to which funds awarded to States and Indian tribes under titles II and V enhanced the ability of grantees to fulfill the core requirements.

''(C) REPORT BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, the Attorney General shall submit to the appropriate committees of the Congress a report on the estimated amount of formula grant funds disbursed by the agency since fiscal year 2010 that did not meet the requirements for awards of formula grants to States under title II.

''(2) OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL PERFORMANCE AUDITS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In order to ensure the effective and appropriate use of grants administered under this Act (excluding title III) and to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse of funds by grantees, the Inspector General of the Department of Justice shall periodically conduct audits of grantees that receive grants under this Act covering each grant recipient at least once every 3 years.

''(B) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY ON WEBSITE.—The Attorney General shall make the summary of each review conducted under this section available on the website of the Department of Justice, subject to redaction as the Attorney General determines necessary to protect classified and other sensitive information.

''(C) MANDATORY EXCLUSION.—A recipient of grant funds under this Act (excluding titles II and III) that is found to have an unresolved audit finding shall not be eligible to receive grant funds under this Act (excluding title III) during the first 2 fiscal years beginning after the 12-month period beginning on the date on which the audit report is issued.

''(D) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this Act (excluding title III), the Administrator shall give priority to an eligible entity that did not have an unresolved audit finding during the 3 fiscal years prior to the date on which the eligible entity submits an application for the grant involved.

''(E) REIMBURSEMENT.—If a grant recipient under this Act (excluding title III) is awarded such funds under this Act during the 2-fiscal-year period in which the recipient is barred from receiving grants under subparagraph (C), the Attorney General shall—

''(i) deposit an amount equal to the amount of the grant funds that were improperly awarded to the grantee into the general fund of the Treasury; and

''(ii) seek to recoup the costs of the repayment to the general fund under clause (i) from the grantee that was erroneously awarded grant funds.

''(F) DEFINITION.—In this paragraph, the term 'unresolved audit finding' means a finding in the final audit report of the Inspector General—

''(i) that the audited recipient has used grant funds for an unauthorized expenditure or otherwise unallowable cost; and

''(ii) that is not closed or resolved during the 12-month period beginning on the date on which the final audit report is issued.

''(3) CONFERENCE EXPENDITURES.—

''(A) LIMITATION.—No amounts authorized to be appropriated to the Department of Justice under this Act may be used by the Attorney General, or by any individual or organization awarded discretionary funds through a cooperative agreement under this Act, to host or support any expenditure for conferences that uses more than $20,000 in funds made available to the Department of Justice, unless the Deputy Attorney General or such Assistant Attorney Generals, Directors, or principal deputies as the Deputy Attorney General may designate, provides prior written authorization that the funds may be expended to host a conference.

''(B) WRITTEN APPROVAL.—Written approval under subparagraph (A) shall include a written estimate of all costs associated with the conference, including the cost of all food and beverages, audiovisual equipment, honoraria for speakers, and entertainment.

''(C) REPORT.—The Deputy Attorney General shall submit an annual report to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives on all conference expenditures approved under this paragraph.

''(4) PROHIBITION ON LOBBYING ACTIVITY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Amounts authorized to be appropriated under this Act may not be utilized by any recipient of a grant made using such amounts—

''(i) to lobby any representative of the Department of Justice regarding the award of grant funding; or

''(ii) to lobby any representative of a Federal, State, local, or tribal government regarding the award of grant funding.

''(B) PENALTY.—If the Attorney General determines that any recipient of a grant made using amounts authorized to be appropriated under this Act has violated subparagraph (A), the Attorney General shall—

''(i) require the recipient to repay the grant in full; and

''(ii) prohibit the recipient to receive another grant under this Act for not less than 5 years.

''(C) CLARIFICATION.—For purposes of this paragraph, submitting an application for a grant under this Act shall not be considered lobbying activity in violation of subparagraph (A).

''(c) PREVENTING DUPLICATIVE GRANTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Before the Attorney General awards a grant to an applicant under this Act, the Attorney General shall compare potential grant awards with other grants awarded under this Act to determine if duplicate grant awards are awarded for the same purpose.

''(2) REPORT.—If the Attorney General awards duplicate grants to the same applicant for the same purpose the Attorney General shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives a report that includes—

''(A) a list of all duplicate grants awarded, including the total dollar amount of any duplicate grants awarded; and

''(B) the reason the Attorney General awarded the duplicative grant.

''(d) COMPLIANCE WITH AUDITING STANDARDS.—The Administrator shall comply with

the Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards, published by the General Accountability Office (commonly known as the 'Yellow Book'), in the conduct of fiscal, compliance, and programmatic audits of States.''.

(b) TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 is amended by striking paragraphs (6) and (7) of section 407 (42 U.S.C. 5776a).

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall take effect on the 1st day of the 1st fiscal year that begins after the date of enactment of this Act.

(3) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—In the case of an entity that is barred from receiving grant funds under paragraph (7)(B)(ii) of section 407 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5776a), the amendment made by paragraph (1) of this subsection shall not affect the applicability to the entity, or to the Attorney General with respect to the entity, of paragraph (7) of such section 407, as in effect on the day before the effective date of the amendment made by paragraph (1).

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

(1) TITLE III.—Section 388(a) of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U. S. C. 5751(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''140,000,000'' and all that follows through ''2013'', and inserting ''101,980,000 for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022'' before the period;

(B) in paragraph (3)(B), by striking ''There'' and all that follows through ''2013'', and inserting ''Of the amount made available for a fiscal year to carry out this title, not more than 1 percent may be used to carry out section 345'' before the period; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by striking ''$25,000,000'' and all that follows through ''2013'', and inserting ''$17,141,000 for each of the fiscal years 2018 through 2022''.

(2) TITLE IV.—Section 408 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U. S. C. 5777) is amended by striking ''2018'' and inserting ''2022''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Minnesota.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1809.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1809, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, more than one million kids are currently involved in the juvenile justice system, a startling fact that carries devastating consequences. Kids who have been incarcerated are 26 percent less likely to graduate from high school, and up to 26 percent more likely to return to jail as adults.

There are many kids experiencing grim and challenging circumstances. As a result, some make bad decisions with costly consequences. The reality is we don't live in a perfect society, and sometimes mistakes are made. But regardless of the circumstances surrounding a bad decision, every kid deserves the opportunity of a better path forward. That is why we are here today, to help State and local leaders provide kids with that better path forward.

In 1974, the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act was signed into law with the goal of helping State and local leaders improve their juvenile justice systems. These systems can play an important role in helping young people turn their lives around and gain the skills they need to be successful.

Unfortunately, it has been 15 years since the Federal law aimed at supporting State and local juvenile justice systems has been reformed. We must update this law to develop more effective support services for vulnerable youth and to equip State and local leaders with the tools they need.

I, along with my colleague across the aisle, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), have put forward the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, a bipartisan bill that helps set kids up for long-term success.

The reforms in this bill will provide local communities the flexibility they need to help at-risk youth turn their lives around and improve public safety. H.R. 1809 prioritizes what works by using evidence-based strategies and current reliable data to help reduce juvenile delinquency.

By strengthening the core protections for youth in the justice system, this bill makes sensible reforms to enhance their safety and keep more kids from being unnecessarily incarcerated. The bill also improves accountability and enhances the oversight of taxpayer dollars to ensure they are being used responsibly. Perhaps most importantly, this bill improves support for prevention services, especially among at-risk youth.

There is no doubt we want to help kids get their lives back on track. But it is also important to do everything we can to ensure more kids don't experience the same pitfalls.

H.R. 1809 is a strong bipartisan bill that will improve the lives of many young Americans, enabling them to get their lives back on track and achieve success.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS) for working with this side of the aisle on bipartisan comprehensive reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act.

Juvenile courts were established by States in the first half of the 20th century based on the emerging legal theory that children should not be held as fully responsible for their actions as adults, a theory borne out over time by scientific research on impulse control and brain development.

The opportunity to rehabilitate children became the focus of the system rather than punishment of offenders. Congress first articulated national standards for juvenile justice in the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, or JJDPA. Long overdue for reauthorization, the bill creates important core protections for our children in the juvenile justice system in each State.

In the 15 years since Congress last reauthorized the program, there have been advancements in research and expansion of evidence when it comes to the prevention of youth incarceration and delinquency.

The bill we will consider today includes necessary improvements to Federal policy grounded in facts proving that the public investments in a continuum of trauma-informed care and alternatives to incarceration and secure detention produce positive results for at-risk youth. These results, in turn, will reduce crime and create long-term savings.

H.R. 1809 requires, for the first time, that State juvenile justice plans have to take into account the latest scientific research on adolescent development and behavior, recognizing the importance of prevention and early intervention in juvenile crime policy.

We shouldn't have to legislate this, but we have seen too often that slogans and sound bites have dictated our national approach to crime policy, particularly juvenile crime. These slogans and soundbites often do nothing to decrease crime. In fact, some have been actually shown to increase the crime rate.

H.R. 1809 encourages States to consider promising practices such as programming to ensure that youth have access to public defenders with juvenile court experience, the use of problem-solving courts as an alternative to probation and confinement, efforts to inform and aid juveniles in the process of sealing and expunging their juvenile records, and programming to address the needs of girls in or at risk of entering the system when developing State plans.

Finally, the bill retools the current title V Local Delinquency Prevention Grant programs retitled as the Youth Promise Incentive Grants for Local Delinquency Prevention Program to support communities in the planning and implementation of evidence-based prevention and intervention programs specifically designed to reduce juvenile delinquency and gang involvement.

Grant recipients would be required to analyze the unmet delinquency needs

of the youth in the community and then develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to address those unmet needs with an emphasis on program coordination.

Research shows that a community-wide coordinated approach to delinquency prevention that utilizes a continuum of services can actually save the community money and improve efficiencies.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to especially thank my colleagues for working with me on the title V provisions which are modeled after a bill I have been working on for nearly 10 years, the Youth PROMISE Act. I am confident that, if enacted, this incentive grant program will vastly improve the lives of and long-term economic opportunity for at-risk youth across the country. The collaborative work of this committee gives me hope that we can get full JJDPA reauthorization over the finish line this year.

Senators GRASSLEY and WHITEHOUSE have introduced a bill in the Senate already. I am optimistic that we will be able to produce a bill together that builds on the knowledge and experience of the last 15 years and makes its way to the President's desk for signature.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL).

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in opportunity. I believe that, given tools, anyone can change their situation for the better. Too often at-risk youth end up in the school-to-prison pipeline. When designed effectively, juvenile justice programs can help reset a troubled youth's path to successful adulthood. That is why I support the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017. This legislation will help youth in the juvenile justice system get on the right path by focusing programs on approaches that work using evidence-based strategies and proven track records. It strengthens accountability and oversight to deliver positive outcomes.

It also provides communities with greater flexibility to deliver services that meet the specific needs of youth in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to cosponsor this legislation to help youth break from their troubled pasts and turn their lives around and become an asset in their communities.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

□ 1400

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WILSON), a strong supporter of at-risk youth.

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that the House today will vote to pass a bipartisan reauthorization of H.R. 1809, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act. I strongly believe that this measure will not only help our Nation's at-risk youth, but it will also vastly improve the juvenile justice system in each State.

One area I was particularly interested in addressing in this bill is finding ways in which State-based practices that have been developed to end the school-to-prison pipeline can be expanded. I strongly believe that youth-based mentoring programs are key to achieving this goal. For that reason, I added language to the bill that expands the definition of juvenile delinquency programs to include youth mentoring programs so those programs will have greater access to Federal grant funding.

One of my life's missions has been to help build a permanent roadblock on the destructive and demoralizing path that has entrapped so many boys and young men of color and other at-risk youth. In fact, there are 50 ninth grade boys from the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project visiting Washington today. If you see them in their red ties, give them a hug and tell them you love them.

My experience as a teacher and principal has taught me the very real benefits of reaching children as early as possible and how, with proper encouragement, support, and resources, young lives can be transformed so that they will make positive and productive choices.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues on the Committee on Education and the Workforce for working very closely together in a bipartisan manner to vote to reauthorize the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. I think we can all agree that this bill's passage will go a long way toward assisting at-risk youth by giving them a second chance at success as well as opportunities to be able to learn from their mistakes and move beyond those mistakes to get an education, build a successful career, and contribute to society.

I especially commend Chairman FOXX and Ranking Member SCOTT, who I know care so much about this issue. I also applaud Representative JASON LEWIS of Minnesota for his spirit.

I encourage a ''yes'' vote on this bill.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CÁRDENAS), who has been working on juvenile justice issues since he was in the California Legislature and Los Angeles City Council.

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, I also want to take the opportunity to thank my colleague for all of his diligence and incredible effort to make sure that we are here today with the successful passage of this important legislation.

The bill we are considering today, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, is a bill that puts Congress back in the driver's seat of evidence-based reform of our Nation's juvenile justice system. For far too long, Congress has failed to reauthorize the landmark Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act passed in 1974. The most important Federal juvenile justice statute has been expired for almost a decade.

I came to Congress to effect change at a national level and to serve the people of my district and all of the people across this great country. Congress has fallen behind the leadership and the progress of Democratic and Republican States alike and cities, as well, across the Nation who have had to take the lead without us. Passing this bill is a step in the right direction and will demonstrate to States and cities across this great country that Congress is listening and acting.

This bill addresses many of the issues that I have been working on in my career as a State legislator, as a city councilman, and now as a Federal elected public servant. For instance, it helps cities and local organizations fund community-based gang prevention and intervention programs.

When I was on the Los Angeles City Council, I made sure that organizations receiving taxpayer dollars from our city were actually achieving the results that they had promised. I am pleased that this bill includes a strong emphasis on research and science and making sure that evidence-based programs are prioritized. It ensures that we are supporting programs and organizations that work, which will save the taxpayers billions of dollars in the short run, hundreds of billions of dollars in the long run, and also make our communities much, much safer.

This bill supports programs that ensure youth have access to appropriate legal representation and programs to expand access. This bill supports programs designed to educate kids and their families about how they can go about sealing and expunging their juvenile records and to help them do that along the way.

This bill supports programs focused on girls in the juvenile justice system. Equally important, this bill makes sure that all ethnicity is recorded so we can get a better understanding of who is in our juvenile justice system and address any disparities if we find them.

This bill will put us on a path to ensuring kids are not detained for an offense that would not be a crime if committed as an adult, such as skipping school or running away from home. It is high time we reauthorize the JJDPA, and I hope my colleagues in the House and Senate can come together to advance this critical update to our juvenile justice laws.

It is our responsibility to lead. I urge my colleagues to be leaders by voting for the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017. Once again, it is long, long overdue.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. CURBELO).

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LEWIS for his work on this important legislation. I also thank the ranking member, Mr. SCOTT, whom I had the pleasure of working with on this same cause last year. This year, of course, I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill.

As a former member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, this was and remains one of my priorities, as I believe that this reauthorization can help us achieve our antipoverty goals here in the U.S. House.

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017 will help set kids up for success that is long term, so they are not caught up in a system that puts them on a path where failure is inevitable. This bill includes reforms that will help juveniles transition out of the system through community-based services and education.

It also ensures that stakeholders can offer their expertise in order to best serve this population while also supporting prevention services to keep kids on the right track. Another important thing to note is that this bill prioritizes evidence-based strategies to reduce juvenile delinquency, directing necessary resources to what actually works.

Everyone deserves the chance to improve their circumstances. Many kids who end up in the juvenile justice system are the most vulnerable in our communities. These kids and the stakeholders and policymakers who support them need the flexibility and tools to effectively serve them. I believe this legislation is a step in the right direction, and I encourage all of my colleagues to vote in favor of it.

I appreciate the work that the Committee on Education and the Workforce has done to help at-risk youth get on a path to a brighter future.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank, again, the gentleman from Minnesota for his leadership. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LEWIS of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Ensuring kids experiencing difficult life circumstances avoid a life of crime is a collaborative effort. I find it a privilege to stand with parents, teachers, and law enforcement officers to ensure at-risk youth are able to get back on track and grow into productive members of society.

The Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017 makes commonsense reforms that move us in a positive direction by providing support to kids who need help the most. I am pleased to help lead this bipartisan effort.

I thank my colleague, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT) for the work he has done on this legislation.

By working together here in Congress, we can ensure young people have the opportunities they need to turn their lives around and earn a lifetime of success. I thank my colleagues for their support of H.R. 1809.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. LEWIS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1809, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IMPROVING SUPPORT FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN ACT OF 2017

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1808) to amend and improve the Missing Children's Assistance Act, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1808

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Section 402 of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5771) is amended—

(1) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

''(1) each year tens of thousands of children run away, or are abducted or removed, from the control of a parent having legal custody without such parent's consent, under circumstances which immediately place the child in grave danger;'',

(2) by striking paragraphs (4) and (5),

(3) in paragraph (6) by inserting '', including child sex trafficking and sextortion'' after ''exploitation'',

(4) in paragraph (8) by adding ''and'' at the end,

(5) by striking paragraph (9),

(6) by amending paragraph (10) to read as follows:

''(10) a key component of such programs is the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children that—

''(A) serves as a nonprofit, national resource center and clearinghouse to provide assistance to victims, families, child-serving professionals, and the general public;

''(B) works with the Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Marshals Service, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of State, the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the United States Secret Service, the United States Postal Inspection Service, other agencies, and nongovernmental organizations in the effort to find missing children and to prevent child victimization; and

''(C) coordinates with each of the missing children clearinghouses operated by the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and international organizations to transmit images and information regarding missing and exploited children to law enforcement, nongovernmental organizations, and corporate partners across the United States and around the world instantly.'', and

(7) by redesignating paragraphs (6), (7), (8), and (10) as paragraphs (4), (5), (6), and (7), respectively.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

Section 403 of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5772) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''legal custodian'' each place it appears and inserting ''parent'',

(B) in subparagraph (A) by striking ''custodian's'' and inserting ''parent's'', and

(C) in subparagraph (C) by striking the period and the end and inserting a semicolon,

(2) in paragraph (2) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(3) in paragraph (3) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and'', and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) the term 'parent' includes a legal guardian or other individual standing in loco parentis (such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or an individual who is legally responsible for the child's welfare).''.

SEC. 4. DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.

Section 404 of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5773) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (3) by striking ''telephone line'' and inserting ''hotline'', and

(B) in paragraph (6)(E)—

(i) by striking ''telephone line'' and inserting ''hotline'',

(ii) by striking ''(b)(1)(A) and'' and inserting ''(b)(1)(A),'', and

(iii) by inserting '', and the number and types of reports to the tipline established under subsection (b)(1)(K)(i)'' before the semicolon at the end,

(2) in subsection (b)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A)—

(i) by striking ''telephone line'' each place it appears and inserting ''hotline'', and

(ii) by striking ''legal custodian'' and inserting ''parent'',

(B) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) in clause (i)—

(I) by striking ''restaurant'' and inserting ''food'', and

(II) by striking ''and'' at the end,

(ii) in clause (ii) by adding ''and'' at the end, and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) innovative and model programs, services, and legislation that benefit missing and exploited children;'',

(C) by striking subparagraphs (E), (F), and (G),

(D) by amending subparagraph (H) to read as follows:

''(H) provide technical assistance and training to families, law enforcement agencies, State and local governments, elements of the criminal justice system, nongovernmental agencies, local educational agencies, and the general public—

''(i) in the prevention, investigation, prosecution, and treatment of cases involving missing and exploited children;

''(ii) to respond to foster children missing from the State child welfare system in coordination with child welfare agencies and courts handling juvenile justice and dependency matters; and

''(iii) in the identification, location, and recovery of victims of, and children at risk for, child sex trafficking;'',

(E) by amending subparagraphs (I), (J), and (K) to read as follows:

''(I) provide assistance to families, law enforcement agencies, State and local governments, nongovernmental agencies, child-serving professionals, and other individuals involved in the location and recovery of missing and abducted children, both nationally, and in cooperation with the Department of State, internationally;

''(J) provide support and technical assistance to child-serving professionals involved in helping to recover missing and exploited children by

searching public records databases to help in the identification, location, and recovery of such children, and help in the location and identification of potential abductors and offenders;

''(K) provide forensic and direct on-site technical assistance and consultation to families, law enforcement agencies, child-serving professionals, and nongovernmental organizations in child abduction and exploitation cases, including facial reconstruction of skeletal remains and similar techniques to assist in the identification of unidentified deceased children;''.

(F) by striking subparagraphs (L) and (M),

(G) by amending subparagraph (N) to read as follows:

''(N) provide training, technical assistance, and information to nongovernmental organizations relating to non-compliant sex offenders and to law enforcement agencies in identifying and locating such individuals;'',

(H) by striking subparagraph (P),

(I) by amending subparagraph (Q) to read as follows:

''(Q) work with families, law enforcement agencies, electronic service providers, electronic payment service providers, technology companies, nongovernmental organizations, and others on methods to reduce the existence and distribution of online images and videos of sexually exploited children—

''(i) by operating a tipline to provide to individuals and electronic service providers an effective means of reporting Internet-related and other instances of child sexual exploitation in the areas of—

''(I) possession, manufacture, and distribution of child pornography;

''(II) online enticement of children for sexual acts;

''(III) child sex trafficking;

''(IV) sex tourism involving children;

''(V) extra familial child sexual molestation;

''(VI) unsolicited obscene material sent to a child;

''(VII) misleading domain names; and

''(VIII) misleading words or digital images on the Internet;

and subsequently to make such reports available to the appropriate law enforcement agency for its review and potential investigation;

''(ii) by operating a child victim identification program to assist law enforcement agencies in identifying victims of child pornography and other sexual crimes to support the recovery of children from sexually exploitative situations; and

''(iii) by utilizing emerging technologies to provide additional outreach and educational materials to parents and families;'',

(J) by striking subparagraph (R),

(K) by amending subparagraphs (S) and (T) to read as follows:

''(S) develop and disseminate programs and information to families, child-serving professionals, law enforcement agencies, State and local governments, nongovernmental organizations, schools, local educational agencies, child-serving organizations, and the general public on—

''(i) the prevention of child abduction and sexual exploitation;

''(ii) Internet safety, including tips for social media and cyberbullying; and

''(iii) sexting and sextortion; and

''(T) provide technical assistance and training to local educational agencies, schools, State and local law enforcement agencies, individuals, and other nongovernmental organizations that assist with finding missing and abducted children in identifying and recovering such children.'', and

(L) by redesignating subparagraphs (H), (I), (J), (K), (N), (O), (Q), (S), (T), (U), and (V) as subparagraphs (E) through (O), respectively.

SEC. 5. GRANTS.

Section 405 of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5775) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (7) by striking ''(as defined in section 403(1)(A))'', and

(B) in paragraph (8)—

(i) by striking ''legal custodians'' and inserting ''parents'', and

(ii) by striking ''custodians'' '' and inserting ''parents'' '', and

(2) in subsection (b)(1)(A) by striking ''legal custodians'' and inserting ''parents''.

SEC. 6. REPORTING.

The Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5771 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by redesignating sections 407 and 408 as section 408 and 409, respectively, and

(2) by inserting after section 406 the following:

''SEC. 407. REPORTING.

''(a) REQUIRED REPORTING.—As a condition of receiving funds under section 404(b), the grant recipient shall, based solely on reports received by the grantee and not involving any data collection by the grantee other than those reports, annually provide to the Administrator and make available to the general public, as appropriate—

''(1) the number of children nationwide who are reported to the grantee as missing;

''(2) the number of children nationwide who are reported to the grantee as victims of non-family abductions;

''(3) the number of children nationwide who are reported to the grantee as victims of family abductions; and

''(4) the number of missing children recovered nationwide whose recovery was reported to the grantee.

''(b) INCIDENCE OF ATTEMPTED CHILD ABDUCTIONS.—As a condition of receiving funds under section 404(b), the grant recipient shall—

''(1) track the incidence of attempted child abductions in order to identify links and patterns;

''(2) provide such information to law enforcement agencies; and

''(3) make such information available to the general public, as appropriate.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) and the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1808.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1808, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, as a father, I cannot imagine the horror moms and dads in this country experience when they discover one of their children has been taken, abused, or exploited. Sadly, that is a nightmare for hundreds of thousands of parents in this country. Last year alone, there were more than 465,000 reports of missing children, and those are just the cases that were reported.

The well-being of America's children has long been a national priority. In 1984, Congress established the Missing and Exploited Children's Program to help coordinate State and local efforts to recover children who are missing and better protect and support kids who are victims of abuse and exploitation. As part of that program, we provide a grant that is used to support the work of the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, known as NCMEC.

For more than 30 years, NCMEC has worked to provide help to people across the country, partnering with parents, law enforcement, nonprofits, and other public and private entities in an effort to recover, protect, and support missing and exploited children and their families. We are here today to ensure this supportive work continues.

H.R. 1808 updates and streamlines the Missing Children's Assistance Act, making positive changes that will enable us to strengthen our efforts. This includes reforms that encourage and increase public awareness of new and innovative ways to recover and protect missing and exploited children.

The bill better protects the growing number of children who go missing from State care or are victims of sex trafficking, while also providing transparency surrounding recovery and prevention efforts. In recent years, some of the advances in technology have, unfortunately, made it easier for kids to be victimized and exploited. H.R. 1808 ensures the law aimed at recovering and protecting exploited children is able to effectively identify and locate today's abductors and criminal offenders, many of whom are turning to more modern techniques to commit their disturbing crimes.

The Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act of 2017 delivers important reforms that will provide the tools needed to effectively serve vulnerable youth, help bring perpetrators to justice, and ensure taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1808.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of H.R. 1808 to amend and improve the Missing Children's Assistance Act.

Mr. Speaker, again, it is an honor to stand with my friend, Mr. GUTHRIE, in bipartisan support of this legislation which, again, makes some important changes to the existing law for the Center for Missing & Exploited Children, as my friend said, a program which was created in 1984. Sadly, it has not finished its mission.

Again, the FBI reports every year there are about 460,000 reports of missing children, and despite the best efforts of programs which NCMEC has operated over the many years, which include hotlines and public information campaigns, again, this is still a scourge which afflicts many families all across the country in Republican, Democratic, rural, suburban, and urban areas.

Again, this bill will basically update and modernize the language of the act

to recognize that there are new forms of threats and risks to minor children, such as human trafficking and online predators.

□ 1415

So it does three essential things:

Number one, it incorporates new terminology to align the law with these new threats, which I mentioned above, and strengthens protections for children at risk.

Number two, it clarifies that NCMEC is a nonprofit entity, which is an issue that has been ensnared in the courts. And, again, Congress' passage and enactment of this bill will clarify this critical issue.

And, lastly, it clarifies that NCMEC is a resource that provides technical assistance not just to law enforcement, but to families, community groups, schools, and the public at large.

Mr. Speaker, this last aspect of the bill is critically important. Last year, Congress passed Public Law 114–184, which President Obama signed into law, the Recovering Missing Children's Act. It was a measure which I cosponsored with Mr. PAULSEN from Minnesota.

This bill actually gave State and local police another tool in terms of recovering missing children. Incredibly, the Tax Code prevented State and local law enforcement from getting access to tax returns from adults who actually had abducted children.

So, incredibly, those adults were claiming these children, who were in their illegal custody, as a tax credit and a tax exemption, but State and local officials were barred by privacy provisions in the IRS code from actually accessing that information. So, on the one hand, you had one arm of government out looking for children and you had another arm of government who knew exactly where they were based on the tax returns which were filed.

Again, NCMEC is in the process of trying to disseminate this new tool, which an audit of the IRS demonstrated that there are roughly 2,000 tax returns a year where adult individuals are actually claiming children as a tax deduction, obviously, with their residence and identity included.

So, again, that is just another example of why we need to update and modernize the law.

I would just indicate on a personal level, my wife, Audrey, is a pediatric nurse practitioner. She works at the Children's Medical Center in Hartford, Connecticut. She is involved in a specialty clinic that helps children of sex abuse and human trafficking. She said that NCMEC is a frequent flier in their office. In the really important work that she and her colleagues do, they constantly use NCMEC as a way of trying to assist law enforcement in terms of helping children who are in these situations of human trafficking and who have been victims of online use of images, which is about as low a depraved activity that is out there right now. So, again, the work of this center, I can attest to from a personal level, is extremely important.

This legislation will update, modernize, and give tools to make sure that all of the good guys out there—the local State police and the folks in the healthcare sector—can really do everything they can to help families in this really terrible, horrific situation.

So, again, I applaud my colleague from Kentucky for his great work, as well as Chairwoman FOXX and Ranking Member SCOTT for bringing this legislation forward. It passed unanimously in committee.

Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge all of my colleagues in the House to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I echo my support, and I enjoy working with my friend, the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. COURTNEY).

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to speak on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1808, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act of 2017.

For more than 30 years, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, or NCMEC, has operated a unique public-private partnership in order to build a national response to crimes affecting those we cherish most: our children.

I am grateful that the bill maintains language that I supported, which grants NCMEC the authority to provide technical assistance to law enforcement agencies and first responders in identifying and recovering victims of child sex trafficking.

During the committee's hearing in March, we heard from NCMEC's director on how their ability to provide technical assistance has allowed them to work in tandem with law enforcement to recover numerous child sex trafficking victims.

Mr. Speaker, we all look forward to the day when no children are ever taken and abused, and this bill helps ensure NCMEC has the tools to get us one step closer to that goal.

I appreciate the bipartisan effort on this, and I urge all my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), a city which has been really challenged with this issue. I know she has been doing great work and has very powerful thoughts and arguments to make today regarding this legislation.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for yielding me this time, and I am pleased to support this bipartisan bill, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act.

I support it because it does exactly what its title says. It fills the gaps in our prior legislation on missing and exploited children. We need to look at such legislation very often because of what we are learning about missing and exploited children.

There are many parts of this bill I support, but I particularly support a provision that we didn't have nearly as much knowledge of during the passage of the last bill: to improve the protection of children in State care. These are often foster children or children without parents. These are the children who may be most susceptible to trafficking and other exploitation.

I certainly would appreciate the efforts of the committee in making sure that provisions of my bill that, I believe, got to you too late, are included in the final House and Senate bill because they are entirely consistent with the bill on the floor today. They come from recent experience of the District of Columbia.

The D.C. police began to do something, which I urge all of you to do, and that is to use social media to let people know when there are missing children. It unnerved residents of the District of Columbia until they recognized that the city didn't have any more missing children than any other jurisdiction. Still, I support what the District did in using social media. Still, we simply don't know enough.

My provisions would have the government collect subsets of data that it does not collect today. For example, we found in the District that there were more missing girls of color than boys. We ought to have known that from national statistics. You don't know it because there are no national statistics on the subsets of children.

My bill would collect and publish demographic characteristics that simply are not published today on race, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. If you think of those categories, you will understand why these may be the children in particular need of protection.

In addition, there is no current comprehensive count of missing children in the United States. So, we need more work on this bill. We need to break down to these subsets so that jurisdictions, like my own, will know where to focus when we are focusing on missing children.

Again, I am pleased that the District turned out not to have any more missing children than the average jurisdiction, but I am also pleased that it got a rise out of people who never would have paid attention to this issue until the police department decided to go on social media.

We want to make sure that we cover all of our children and that we do what this bill does.

What are the gaps? Where do we need to fill in?

Mr. Speaker, this is the first bill on missing children in a number of years. We must make sure no children are left behind.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1808, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act, which improves the Missing Children's Assistance Act.

Mr. Speaker, this Thursday is National Missing Children's Day. I can't imagine the pain and suffering that occurs when a child goes missing. I am a proud cosponsor of this legislation, and I am proud of the Committee on Education and the Workforce for its work on this important issue.

This legislation strengthens existing efforts to help recover missing children and prevents more children from being victims of abuse and exploitation.

This bill also includes a provision to incorporate developing technologies related to the reporting of child exploitation. This provision was a result of an idea shared by a constituent of mine, Michael Reed. His wife was a victim of abuse as a child, and he has devoted his life to making sure other children have a voice and the ability to report the abuse that they are experiencing. I am committed to ensuring that Congress is working to protect these children.

Mr. Speaker, I thank both sides of the aisle on the Education and the Workforce Committee, and I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT), the ranking member of the Education and the Workforce Committee, and a strong proponent of this legislation.

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1808, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act. This bill will strengthen recovery and prevention efforts of missing and exploited children by renewing and updating support for the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, or NCMEC.

The terror experienced by parents of a missing child is unfathomable. Both the child and the parents experience pain, trauma, fear, and uncertainty. This is why affected families need the full support of law enforcement, schools, businesses, and other entities that may be able to assist in locating and recovering missing or exploited children.

In 2013, Congress reauthorized the Missing Children's Assistance Act and updated the role of NCMEC. The organization was required, at that time, to coordinate with the Interagency Council on Homelessness in order to address the high number of sex trafficking victims who were homeless youth.

Now, in 2017, Congress is including several additional improvements. As this bill heads to the Senate, I will work with my colleagues in both Chambers to improve the reporting of characteristics of children trafficked as it relates to the Office of Juvenile Justice's triennial incidence of missing children study.

Mr. Speaker, despite the best efforts of NCMEC, more than 10,000 children go missing each year, and scores of children are forced into sexual exploitation and trafficking. I am hopeful that the enactment of these initiatives will assist in the efforts to end exploitation and trafficking. I am also hopeful that Congress will empower the work of NCMEC by appropriate funding in fiscal year 2018 and above.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. MITCHELL), my friend and a member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Mr. MITCHELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act.

My wife and I have six children. Our youngest is just 7 years old. We would do anything to protect them. I can't even imagine the pain of having a child go missing, or to learn that they have been hurt or abused in any manner.

Tragically, this is a reality for far too many children and too many families in America. Last year, there were more than 465,000 reports of missing children in the United States. To put that number in perspective, about 700,000 people live in Michigan's 10th Congressional District, my home.

Even one child going missing or being abused is too many. We must recognize the seriousness of this problem and we must do everything we can to protect our children.

This important bill will assist NCMEC in locating missing children and in identifying abductors. It will help prevent children from becoming the victims of exploitation online and increase awareness about how to recover missing children.

Mr. Speaker, today we come together to support America's children. I am proud to be a sponsor of this legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ADAMS), an outstanding member of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding.

I proudly stand today in support of H.R. 1808, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act.

This bipartisan legislation reflects both Democrats' and Republicans' desire to protect and care for our greatest resource: our children.

In my home State of North Carolina, the trafficking of young women has become an epidemic. There were 181 human trafficking cases reported in North Carolina in 2016, and Charlotte was home to more of them than anywhere else.

□ 1430

That figure gave us the dishonor of being ranked among the top 10 States in the Nation in the number of trafficking reports, and that doesn't even account for those children who have not yet been identified as victims of this shameful practice.

In North Carolina, lawmakers have sponsored efforts to establish pilot programs to help victims and train law enforcement to recognize the signs of trafficking. It is time Congress does its part and passes H.R. 1808 to support States in their efforts.

This bill would improve efforts by both law enforcement and the general public to combat trafficking, and it would enhance the identification and location of missing children and their abductors.

It would protect children from being victims to online predators and keep a promise that was made 33 years ago, when Congress first passed the Missing Children's Assistance Act and we vowed to assist the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children in protecting and recovering our missing and vulnerable youth.

I am a parent, I am a grandparent, Mr. Speaker, and I am a concerned member of my community; and my district and my State have been torn apart by human trafficking.

This is an opportunity for us to come together as Americans and support an initiative that could save lives. I urge my colleagues to pass H.R. 1808 and prove that we can all put politics aside when it comes to protecting our children.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), the distinguished chairwoman of the Education and the Workforce Committee.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague, Mr. GUTHRIE, for his great work on handling this bill today and on the bill itself.

No child should live in fear, Mr. Speaker, and yet every year hundreds of thousands of children across the country are abducted, abused, or exploited. The safety of America's children has long been a national priority. That is why I stand here today in strong support of H.R. 1808, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act.

In 1984, Congress passed the Missing Children's Assistance Act and established a grant to enhance our country's efforts to find missing children and prevent child exploitation. For more than 30 years, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, also known as NCMEC, has used the grant to coordinate a national response to crises and crimes affecting America's most vulnerable children.

Through unique public-private partnerships, NCMEC works with families,

law enforcement, schools, community leaders, and nonprofits in its efforts to find children who are missing and protect youth who are victims of sexual exploitation.

The reforms in the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act will ensure the vital work of recovering and supporting vulnerable youth is able to continue, reuniting more families with their loved ones and helping victims receive the support they desperately need. This is a bill that delivers the reforms needed to save lives.

I am also proud to say it is a bill with strong bipartisan support. At the opening of NCMEC, former President Ronald Reagan said:

''No single sector of our Nation can solve the problem of missing and exploited children alone. But by working together, pooling our resources, and building on our strengths, we can accomplish great things.''

''Together we can turn the tide on these hateful crimes. . . .''

Together we can turn the tide. The work our colleagues, Representatives GUTHRIE and COURTNEY, have done to get this important bill to the House floor demonstrates the type of collaboration President Reagan spoke of on that day at the opening of the NCMEC. And the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act isn't the only bill we have been able to reach across the aisle on and deliver reforms that will help vulnerable youth.

Working together, we are also advancing positive bipartisan solutions in H.R. 1809, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017. This bill aims at assisting a different kind of vulnerable youth, ensuring kids who find themselves in the juvenile justice system have an opportunity to turn their lives around and achieve success.

Every child deserves an opportunity to make a change for the better, if that child has made a mistake. By working together to develop the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017, my colleagues, Representatives LEWIS and SCOTT, have put forward a bill that will help ensure at-risk youth are afforded an opportunity to do just that.

Both of these bills renew the commitment we have made to help and protect our Nation's most vulnerable children. All of these reforms will make a real difference in the lives of countless children, young adults, parents, and families across the country. I am proud of the bipartisan work we have been able to accomplish.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. GUTHRIE. I yield the gentlewoman an additional 30 seconds.

Ms. FOXX. I want to thank Representative SCOTT, as well as Representatives LEWIS, GUTHRIE, and COURTNEY for their leadership on these issues. I urge our fellow colleagues to support the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN), a good friend of mine who, in his work on the Ways and Means Committee, has been focused on and dedicated to this issue.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his work on this on a bipartisan basis with Mr. COURTNEY.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 1808, the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act. This important initiative, it builds on the bipartisan work we have already accomplished to combat sex trafficking and child exploitation.

Since its creation in 1984, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children has worked tirelessly to protect children from being exploited, to reunite missing children with their families, and to provide resources and training to our law enforcement community to help assist in this effort.

This legislation today will assist the Center in strengthening its prevention and its recovery programs. One of those programs is the CyberTipline which, since being launched in 1998, has received 12.7 million reports of suspected child sexual exploitation. It is programs like this, Mr. Speaker, that go a long way to helping us save lives and put an end to sexual exploitation and trafficking of children.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

Mr. COURTNEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

In summary, we have heard again a very broad-based bipartisan chorus of voices in support of this legislation. Again, like in committee, hopefully, all of us will stand together to support this really important update to making sure that families get all the help, and law enforcement get all the help, that they need to eliminate the scourge of this problem.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I had the opportunity to visit the Center, and the building that I got to go visit was full of men and women who show up every day, who do exceptional work dealing with the disturbing issues, and so my hat is off to them. They deal with stuff that is just unimaginable to most of us, and they do it in a way that is dignified and in a way that is well worthy of the effort that we are giving them to give more transparency and empower them to help more.

I really appreciate working with my friend, Mr. COURTNEY. H.R. 1808 is a bipartisan proposal, and I urge my colleagues to support the Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. GUTHRIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1808, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS APPEALS IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2288) to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2288

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. REFORM OF RIGHTS AND PROCESSES RELATING TO APPEALS OF DECISIONS REGARDING CLAIMS FOR BENEFITS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—Section 101 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(34) The term 'agency of original jurisdiction' means the activity which entered the original determination with regard to a claim for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

''(35) The term 'relevant evidence' means evidence that tends to prove or disprove a matter in issue.

''(36) The term 'supplemental claim' means any claim for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary filed by a claimant who had previously filed a claim for the same or similar benefits on the same or similar basis.''.

(b) NOTICE REGARDING CLAIMS.—Section 5103(a) of such title is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), in the first sentence, by striking ''The'' and inserting ''Except as provided in paragraph (3), the'';

(2) in paragraph (2)(B)(i) by striking '', a claim for reopening a prior decision on a claim, or a claim for an increase in benefits;'' and inserting ''or a supplemental claim;''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) The requirement to provide notice under paragraph (1) shall not apply with respect to a supplemental claim that is filed within the timeframe set forth in subparagraphs (B) and (D) of section 5110(a)(2) of this title.''.

(c) MODIFICATION OF RULE REGARDING DISALLOWED CLAIMS.—Section 5103A(f) of such title is amended—

(1) by striking ''reopen'' and inserting ''readjudicate''; and

(2) by striking ''material'' and inserting ''relevant''.

(d) MODIFICATION OF DUTY TO ASSIST CLAIMANTS.—Section 5103A of such title is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (e) through (g) as subsections (g) through (i), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following new subsections:

''(e) APPLICABILITY OF DUTY TO ASSIST.—(1) The Secretary's duty to assist under this section shall apply only to a claim, or supplemental claim, for a benefit under a law administered by the Secretary until the time that a claimant is provided notice of the agency of original jurisdiction's decision with respect to such claim, or supplemental claim, under section 5104 of this title.

''(2) The Secretary's duty to assist under this section shall not apply to higher level review by the agency of original jurisdiction, pursuant to section 5104B of this title, or to review on appeal by the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

''(f) CORRECTION OF DUTY TO ASSIST ERRORS.—(1) If, during review of the agency of original jurisdiction decision under section 5104B of this title, the higher level adjudicator identifies or learns of an error on the part of the agency of original jurisdiction to satisfy its duties under this section, and that error occurred prior to the agency of original jurisdiction decision being reviewed, unless the claim can be granted in full, the higher level adjudicator shall return the claim for correction of such error and readjudication.

''(2)(A) If the Board of Veterans' Appeals, during review on appeal of an agency of original jurisdiction decision, identifies or learns of an error on the part of the agency of original jurisdiction to satisfy its duties under this section, and that error occurred prior to the agency of original jurisdiction decision on appeal, unless the claim can be granted in full, the Board shall remand the claim to the agency of original jurisdiction for correction of such error and readjudication.

''(B) Remand for correction of such error may include directing the agency of original jurisdiction to obtain an advisory medical opinion under section 5109 of this title.

''(3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to imply that the Secretary, during the consideration of a claim, does not have a duty to correct an error described in paragraph (1) or (2) that was erroneously not identified during higher level review or during review on appeal with respect to the claim.''.

(e) DECISIONS AND NOTICES OF DECISIONS.—Subsection (b) of section 5104 of such title is amended to read as follows:

''(b) Each notice provided under subsection (a) shall also include all of the following:

''(1) Identification of the issues adjudicated.

''(2) A summary of the evidence considered by the Secretary.

''(3) A summary of the applicable laws and regulations.

''(4) Identification of findings favorable to the claimant.

''(5) In the case of a denial of a claim, identification of elements not satisfied leading to the denial.

''(6) An explanation of how to obtain or access evidence used in making the decision.

''(7) If applicable, identification of the criteria that must be satisfied to grant service connection or the next higher level of compensation.''.

(f) BINDING NATURE OF FAVORABLE FINDINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 51 of such title is amended by inserting after section 5104 the following new section:

''§ 5104A. Binding nature of favorable findings

''Any finding favorable to the claimant as described in section 5104(b)(4) of this title shall be binding on all subsequent adjudicators within the Department, unless clear and convincing evidence is shown to the contrary to rebut such favorable finding.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 51 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5104 the following new item:

''5104A. Binding nature of favorable findings.''.

(g) HIGHER LEVEL REVIEW BY AGENCY OF ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 51 of such title, as amended by subsection (f), is further amended by inserting after section 5104A, as added by such subsection, the following new section:

''§ 5104B. Higher level review by the agency of original jurisdiction

''(a) IN GENERAL.—(1) A claimant may request a review of the decision of the agency of original jurisdiction by a higher level adjudicator within the agency of original jurisdiction.

''(2) The Secretary shall approve each request for review under paragraph (1).

''(b) TIME AND MANNER OF REQUEST.—(1) A request for higher level review by the agency of original jurisdiction shall be—

''(A) in writing in such form as the Secretary may prescribe; and

''(B) made within one year of the notice of the agency of original jurisdiction's decision.

''(2) Such request may specifically indicate whether such review is requested by a higher level adjudicator at the same office within the agency of original jurisdiction or by an adjudicator at a different office of the agency of original jurisdiction. The Secretary shall not deny such a request for review by an adjudicator at a different office of the agency of original jurisdiction without good cause.

''(c) DECISION.—Notice of a higher level review decision under this section shall be provided in writing and shall include a general statement—

''(1) reflecting whether evidence was not considered pursuant to subsection (d); and

''(2) noting the options available to the claimant to have the evidence described in paragraph (1), if any, considered by the Department.

''(d) EVIDENTIARY RECORD FOR REVIEW.—The evidentiary record before the higher level adjudicator shall be limited to the evidence of record in the agency of original jurisdiction decision being reviewed.

''(e) DE NOVO REVIEW.—A review of the decision of the agency of original jurisdiction by a higher level adjudicator within the agency of original jurisdiction shall be de novo.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 51 of such title, as amended by subsection (f), is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5104A, as added by such subsection, the following new item:

''5104B. Higher level review by the agency of original jurisdiction.''.

(h) OPTIONS FOLLOWING DECISION BY AGENCY OF ORIGINAL JURISDICTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 51 of such title, as amended by subsection (g), is further amended by inserting after section 5104B, as added by such subsection, the following new section:

''§ 5104C. Options following decision by agency of original jurisdiction

''(a) WITHIN ONE YEAR OF DECISION.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), in any case in which the Secretary renders a decision on a claim, the claimant may take any of the following actions on or before the date that is one year after the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues a decision with respect to that claim:

''(A) File a request for higher level review under section 5104B of this title.

''(B) File a supplemental claim under section 5108 of this title.

''(C) File a notice of disagreement under section 7105 of this title.

''(2)(A) Once a claimant takes an action set forth in paragraph (1), the claimant may not take another action set forth in that paragraph with respect to such claim until—

''(i) the higher level review, supplemental claim, or notice of disagreement is adjudicated; or

''(ii) the request for higher level review, supplemental claim, or notice of disagreement is withdrawn.

''(B) Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a claimant from taking any of the actions set forth in paragraph (1) in succession with respect to different issues contained within a claim.

''(C) Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a claimant from taking different actions set forth in paragraph (1) with respect to different claims.

''(D) The Secretary may, as the Secretary considers appropriate, develop and implement a policy for claimants who—

''(i) take an action under paragraph (1);

''(ii) wish to withdraw the action before the higher level review, supplemental claim, or notice of disagreement is adjudicated; and

''(iii) in lieu of such action take a different action under paragraph (1).

''(b) MORE THAN ONE YEAR AFTER DECISION.—In any case in which the Secretary renders a decision on a claim and more than one year has passed since the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues a decision with respect to that claim, the claimant may file a supplemental claim under section 5108 of this title.

''(c) BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS AND COURT OF APPEALS FOR VETERANS CLAIMS.—Nothing in subsection (a) or (b) may be construed to limit the options available to a claimant pursuant to chapter 71 or 72 of this title.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 51 of such title, as amended by subsection (g), is further amended by inserting after the item relating to section 5104B, as added by such subsection, the following new item:

''5104C. Options following decision by agency of original jurisdiction.''.

(i) SUPPLEMENTAL CLAIMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 5108 of such title is amended to read as follows:

''§ 5108. Supplemental claims

''If new and relevant evidence is presented or secured with respect to a supplemental claim, the Secretary shall readjudicate the claim taking into consideration any evidence added to the record after the former disposition of the claim.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 51 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 5108 and inserting the following new item:

''5108. Supplemental claims.''.

(j) REMAND TO OBTAIN ADVISORY MEDICAL OPINION.—Section 5109 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d)(1) The Board of Veterans' Appeals shall remand a claim to direct the agency of original jurisdiction to obtain an advisory medical opinion from an independent medical expert under this section if the Board finds that the Veterans Benefits Administration should have exercised its discretion to obtain such an opinion.

''(2) The Board's remand instructions shall include the questions to be posed to the independent medical expert providing the advisory medical opinion.''.

(k) RESTATEMENT OF REQUIREMENT FOR EXPEDITED TREATMENT OF REMANDED CLAIMS.—Section 5109B of such title is amended to read as follows:

"§ 5109B. Expedited treatment of remanded claims

''The Secretary shall take such actions as may be necessary to provide for the expeditious treatment by the Veterans Benefits Administration of any claim that is returned by a higher level adjudicator under section 5104B of this title or remanded by the Board of Veterans' Appeals.''.

(l) EFFECTIVE DATES OF AWARDS.—Section 5110 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

''(a)(1) Unless specifically provided otherwise in this chapter, the effective date of an award based on an initial claim, or a supplemental claim, of compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or pension, shall be fixed in accordance with the facts found, but shall not be earlier than the date of receipt of application therefor.

''(2) For purposes of determining the effective date of an award under this section, the date of application shall be considered the date of the filing of the initial application for a benefit if the claim is continuously pursued by filing any of the following, either alone or in succession:

''(A) A request for higher level review under section 5104B of this title on or before the date that is one year after the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues a decision.

''(B) A supplemental claim under section 5108 of this title on or before the date that is one year after the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues a decision.

''(C) A notice of disagreement on or before the date that is one year after the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues a decision.

''(D) A supplemental claim under section 5108 of this title on or before the date that is one year after the date on which the Board of Veterans' Appeals issues a decision.

''(E) A supplemental claim under section 5108 of this title on or before the date that is one year after the date on which the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims issues a decision.

''(3) Except as otherwise provided in this section, for supplemental claims received more than one year after the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issued a decision or the Board of Veterans' Appeals issued a decision, the effective date shall be fixed in accordance with the facts found, but shall not be earlier than the date of receipt of the supplemental claim.''; and

(2) in subsection (i), in the first sentence—

(A) by striking ''reopened'' and inserting ''readjudicated'';

(B) by striking ''material'' and inserting ''relevant''; and

(C) by striking ''reopening'' and inserting ''readjudication''.

(m) DEFINITION OF AWARD OR INCREASED AWARD FOR PURPOSES OF PROVISIONS RELATING TO COMMENCEMENT OF PERIOD OF PAYMENT.—Section 5111(d)(1) of such title is amended by striking ''or reopened award'' and inserting ''award or award based on a supplemental claim''.

(n) MODIFICATION ON LIMITATION ON FEES ALLOWABLE FOR REPRESENTATION.—Section 5904(c) of such title is amended, in paragraphs (1) and (2), by striking ''notice of disagreement is filed'' both places it appears and inserting ''claimant is provided notice of the agency of original jurisdiction's initial decision under section 5104 of this title''.

(o) CLARIFICATION OF BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS REFERRAL REQUIREMENTS AFTER ORDER FOR RECONSIDERATION OF DECISIONS.—Section 7103(b)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''heard'' both places it appears and inserting ''decided''.

(p) CONFORMING AMENDMENT RELATING TO READJUDICATION.—Section 7104(b) of such title is amended by striking ''reopened'' and inserting ''readjudicated''.

(q) MODIFICATION OF PROCEDURES FOR APPEALS TO BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7105 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subsection (a), by striking the first sentence and inserting ''Appellate review shall be initiated by the filing of a notice of disagreement in the form prescribed by the Secretary.''; and

(B) by amending subsection (b) to read as follows:

''(b)(1)(A) Except in the case of simultaneously contested claims, notice of disagreement shall be filed within one year from the date of the mailing of notice of the decision of the agency of original jurisdiction pursuant to section 5104, 5104B, or 5108 of this title.

''(B) A notice of disagreement postmarked before the expiration of the 1-year period shall be accepted as timely filed.

''(C) A question as to timeliness or adequacy of the notice of disagreement shall be decided by the Board.

''(2)(A) Notices of disagreement shall be in writing, shall identify the specific determination with which the claimant disagrees, and may be filed by the claimant, the claimant's legal guardian, or such accredited representative, attorney, or authorized agent as may be selected by the claimant or legal guardian.

''(B) Not more than one recognized organization, attorney, or agent may be recognized at any one time in the prosecution of a claim.

''(C) Notices of disagreement shall be filed with the Board.

''(3) The notice of disagreement shall indicate whether the claimant requests—

''(A) a hearing before the Board, which shall include an opportunity to submit evidence in accordance with section 7113(b) of this title;

''(B) an opportunity to submit additional evidence without a hearing before the Board, which shall include an opportunity to submit evidence in accordance with section 7113(c) of this title; or

''(C) a review by the Board without a hearing or the submittal of additional evidence.

''(4) The Secretary may develop a policy to permit a claimant to modify the information identified in the notice of disagreement after the notice of disagreement has been filed under this section pursuant to such requirements as the Secretary may prescribe.'';

(C) by amending subsection (c) to read as follows:

''(c) If no notice of disagreement is filed in accordance with this chapter within the prescribed period, the action or decision of the agency of original jurisdiction shall become final and the claim shall not thereafter be readjudicated or allowed, except as may otherwise be provided by section 5104B or 5108 of this title or such regulations as are consistent with this title.'';

(D) by striking subsection (d) and inserting the following new subsection (d):

''(d) The Board of Veterans' Appeals may dismiss any appeal which fails to identify the specific determination with which the claimant disagrees.'';

(E) by striking subsection (e); and

(F) in the section heading, by striking ''**notice of disagreement and**''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 71 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 7105 and inserting the following new item:

''7105. Filing of appeal.''.

(r) MODIFICATION OF PROCEDURES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SIMULTANEOUSLY CONTESTED CLAIMS.—Subsection (b) of section 7105A of such title is amended to read as follows:

''(b)(1) The substance of the notice of disagreement shall be communicated to the other party or parties in interest and a period of thirty days shall be allowed for filing a brief or argument in response thereto.

''(2) Such notice shall be forwarded to the last known address of record of the parties concerned, and such action shall constitute sufficient evidence of notice.''.

(s) REPEAL OF PROCEDURES FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 71 of such title is amended by striking section 7106.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 71 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 7106.

(t) MODIFICATIONS RELATING TO APPEALS: DOCKETS; HEARINGS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7107 of such title is amended to read as follows:

"§ 7107. Appeals: dockets; hearings

''(a) DOCKETS.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), the Board shall maintain at least two separate dockets.

''(2) The Board may not maintain more than two separate dockets unless the Board notifies the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives of any additional docket, including a justification for maintaining such additional docket.

''(3)(A) The Board may assign to each docket maintained under paragraph (1) such cases as the Board considers appropriate, except that cases described in clause (i) of subparagraph (B) may not be assigned to any docket to which cases described in clause (ii) of such paragraph are assigned.

''(B) Cases described in this subparagraph are the following:

''(i) Cases in which no Board hearing is requested and no additional evidence will be submitted.

''(ii) Cases in which a Board hearing is requested in the notice of disagreement.

''(4) Except as provided in subsection (b), each case before the Board will be decided in regular order according to its respective place on the docket to which it is assigned by the Board.

''(b) ADVANCEMENT ON THE DOCKET.—(1) A case on one of the dockets of the Board maintained under subsection (a) may, for cause shown, be advanced on motion for earlier consideration and determination.

''(2) Any such motion shall set forth succinctly the grounds upon which the motion is based.

''(3) Such a motion may be granted only—

''(A) if the case involves interpretation of law of general application affecting other claims;

''(B) if the appellant is seriously ill or is under severe financial hardship; or

''(C) for other sufficient cause shown.

''(c) MANNER AND SCHEDULING OF HEARINGS FOR CASES ON DOCKET THAT MAY INCLUDE HEARING.—(1) For cases on a docket maintained by the Board under subsection (a) that may include a hearing, in which a hearing is requested in the notice of disagreement, the Board shall notify the appellant whether a Board hearing will be held—

''(A) at its principal location; or

''(B) by picture and voice transmission at a facility of the Department where the Secretary has provided suitable facilities and equipment to conduct such hearings.

''(2)(A) Upon notification of a Board hearing at the Board's principal location as described in subparagraph (A) of paragraph (1), the appellant may alternatively request a hearing as described in subparagraph (B) of such paragraph. If so requested, the Board shall grant such request.

''(B) Upon notification of a Board hearing by picture and voice transmission as described in subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1), the appellant may alternatively request a hearing as described in subparagraph (A) of such paragraph. If so requested, the Board shall grant such request.

''(d) SCREENING OF CASES.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude the screening of cases for purposes of—

''(1) determining the adequacy of the record for decisional purposes; or

''(2) the development, or attempted development, of a record found to be inadequate for decisional purposes.

''(e) POLICY ON CHANGING DOCKETS.—The Secretary may develop and implement a policy allowing a claimant to move the claimant's case from one docket to another docket.''.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than the date that is 90 days before the date set forth in subsection (x), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth a description of the docket that will be maintained under section 7107 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by paragraph (1), for cases in which no hearing before the Board of Veterans' Appeals is requested in the notice of disagreement but the appellant requests, in the notice of disagreement, an opportunity to submit additional evidence.

(u) REPEAL OF CERTAIN AUTHORITY FOR INDEPENDENT MEDICAL OPINIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 7109 of such title is repealed.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 5701(b)(1) of such title is amended by striking ''or 7109''.

(3) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 71 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 7109.

(v) CLARIFICATION OF PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF DECISIONS ON GROUNDS OF CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE ERROR.—Section 7111(e) of such title is amended by striking '', without referral to any adjudicative or hearing official acting on behalf of the Secretary''.

(w) EVIDENTIARY RECORD BEFORE BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 71 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 7113. Evidentiary record before the Board of Veterans' Appeals

''(a) CASES WITH NO REQUEST FOR A HEARING OR ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE.—For cases in which a hearing before the Board of Veterans' Appeals is not requested in the notice of disagreement and no request was made to submit evidence, the evidentiary record before the Board shall be limited to the evidence of record at the time of the decision of the agency of original jurisdiction on appeal.

''(b) CASES WITH A REQUEST FOR HEARING.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), for cases in which a hearing is requested in the notice of disagreement, the evidentiary record before the Board shall be limited to the evidence of record at the time of the decision of the agency of original jurisdiction on appeal.

''(2) The evidentiary record before the Board for cases described in paragraph (1) shall include each of the following, which the Board shall consider in the first instance:

''(A) Evidence submitted by the appellant and the representative of the appellant, if any, at the Board hearing.

''(B) Evidence submitted by the appellant and the representative of the appellant, if any, within 90 days following the Board hearing.

''(c) CASES WITH NO REQUEST FOR A HEARING AND WITH A REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE.—(1) Except as provided in paragraph (2), for cases in which a hearing is not requested in the notice of disagreement but an opportunity to submit evidence is requested, the evidentiary record before the Board shall be limited to the evidence considered by the agency of original jurisdiction in the decision on appeal.

''(2) The evidentiary record before the Board for cases described in paragraph (1) shall include each of the following, which the Board shall consider in the first instance:

''(A) Evidence submitted by the appellant and the representative of the appellant, if any, with the notice of disagreement.

''(B) Evidence submitted by the appellant and the representative of the appellant, if any, within 90 days following receipt of the notice of disagreement.''.

(2) NOTIFICATION WHEN EVIDENCE NOT CONSIDERED.—Section 7104(d) of such title is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph (2):

''(2) a general statement—

''(A) reflecting whether evidence was not considered in making the decision because the evidence was received at a time when not permitted under section 7113 of this title; and

''(B) noting such options as may be available for having the evidence considered by the Department; and''.

(3) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 71 of such title is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 7112 the following new item:

''7113. Evidentiary record before the Board of Veterans' Appeals.''.

(x) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, the amendments made by this section shall apply to all claims for which notice of a decision under section 5104 of title 38, United States Code, is provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on or after the later of—

(A) the date that is 540 days after the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(B) the date that is 30 days after the date on which the Secretary of Veterans Affairs submits to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives—

(i) a certification that the Secretary confirms, without delegation, that the Department of Veterans Affairs has the resources, personnel, office space, procedures, and information technology required—

(I) to carry out the modernized appeals system; and

(II) to timely address both appeals of decisions on legacy claims and appeals under the modernized appeals system; and

(ii) a description of the collaboration conducted under paragraph (2) in making such certification, including the views of the organizations and stakeholders specified in such paragraph.

(2) COLLABORATION.—In determining whether and when to make a certification under paragraph (1)(B)(i), the Secretary shall collaborate with, partner with, and give weight to the advice of the three veterans service organizations with the most members and such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(3) EARLY APPLICABILITY.—The Secretary may apply the modernized appeals system to a claim with respect to which the claimant—

(A) receives a notice of a decision under section 5104 of such title after the date of the enactment of this Act and before the applicability date set forth in paragraph (1); and

(B) elects to subject the claim to the modernized appeals system.

(4) PHASED ROLLOUT.—The Secretary may begin implementation of the modernized appeals system in phases, with the first phase of such phased implementation beginning on the applicability date set forth in paragraph (1).

(5) LEGACY CLAIMS.—With respect to legacy claims, upon the issuance to a claimant of a statement of the case or a supplemental statement of the case occurring on or after the applicability date specified in paragraph (1), a claimant may elect to participate in the modernized appeals system.

(6) PUBLICATION OF APPLICABILITY DATE.—Not later than the date on which the modernized appeals system goes into effect (or the first phase of the modernized appeals system goes into effect under paragraph (4), as the case may be), the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register such date.

SEC. 3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND REPORTS FOR PROCESSING OF LEGACY APPEALS AND IMPLEMENTING MODERNIZED APPEALS SYSTEM.

(a) PLAN REQUIRED.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General of the United States a comprehensive plan for—

(1) the number of resolutions for appeals of decisions on legacy claims that the Secretary considers pending;

(2) implementing the modernized appeals system; and

(3) timely processing, under the modernized appeals system, of—

(A) supplemental claims under section 5108 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2(i);

(B) requests for higher level review under section 5104B of such title, as added by section 2(g); and

(C) appeals on any docket maintained under section 7107 of such title, as amended by section 2(t).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) An estimate (including a detailed description of the bases the Secretary uses to develop such estimate) of the—

(A) numbers of appeals and the timeliness of deciding appeals under the modernized appeals system, including such number under each docket described in section 7107 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2; and

(B) numbers of appeals of decisions on legacy claims and the timeliness of deciding such appeals.

(2) Delineation of the total resource requirements of the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans' Appeals, disaggregated by resources required to implement and administer the modernized appeals system and resources required to address the appeals of decisions on legacy claims.

(3) Delineation of the personnel requirements of the Administration and the Board, including staffing levels during the—

(A) period in which the Administration and the Board are concurrently processing—

(i) appeals of decisions on legacy claims; and

(ii) appeals of decisions on nonlegacy claims under the modernized appeals system; and

(B) the period during which the Administration and the Board are no longer processing any appeals of decisions on legacy claims.

(4) Identification of the legal authorities under which the Administration or the Board may—

(A) hire additional employees to conduct the concurrent processing described in paragraph (2)(A); and

(B) remove employees who are no longer required by the Administration or the Board once the Administration and the Board are no longer processing any appeals of decisions on legacy claims.

(5) An estimate of the amount of time the Administration and the Board will require to hire additional employees as described in paragraph (3)(A) once funding has been made available for such purpose, including a comparison of such estimate and the historical average time required by the Administration and the Board to hire additional employees.

(6) A description of the modifications to the information technology systems of the Administration and the Board that the Administration and the Board require to carry out the modernized appeals system, including cost estimates and a timeline for making the modifications.

(7) An estimate of the office space the Administration and the Board will require during each of the periods described in paragraph (2), including—

(A) an estimate of the amount of time the Administration and the Board will require to acquire any additional office space to carry out processing of appeals of decisions on legacy claims and processing of appeals under the modernized appeals system;

(B) a comparison of the estimate under subparagraph (A) and the historical average time required by the Administration and the Board to acquire new office space; and

(C) a plan for using telework to accommodate staff exceeding available office space, including how the Administration and the Board will provide training and oversight with respect to such teleworking.

(8) Projections for the productivity of individual employees at the Administration and the Board in carrying out tasks relating to the processing of appeals of decisions on legacy claims and appeals under the modernized appeals system, taking into account the experience level of new employees and the enhanced notice requirements under section 5104(b) of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2(e).

(9) An outline of the outreach the Secretary expects to conduct to inform veterans, families of veterans, survivors of veterans, veterans service organizations, military service organizations, congressional caseworkers, advocates for veterans, and such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers appropriate about the modernized appeals system, including—

(A) a description of the resources required to conduct such outreach; and

(B) timelines for such outreach.

(10) Identification of and a timeline for—

(A) any training that may be required as a result of hiring new employees to carry out the modernized appeals system or to process appeals of decisions on legacy claims; and

(B) any retraining of existing employees that may be required to carry out such system or to process such claims.

(11) Identification of—

(A) the costs to the Department of the training identified under paragraph (10) and any additional training staff and any additional training facilities that will be required to provide such training; and

(B) any issues relating to how the hiring and training procedures of the Department may change because of unplanned circumstances (including with respect to delays in developing an information technology system to process appeals under the modernized appeals system) relating to carrying out the modernized appeals system or to process appeals of decisions on legacy claims.

(12) Estimated timelines for updating any policy guidance, internet websites, and official forms that may be necessary to carry out the modernized appeals system, including—

(A) identification of which offices and entities will be involved in efforts relating to such updating; and

(B) historical information about how long similar update efforts have taken.

(13) A timeline, including interim milestones, for promulgating such regulations as may be necessary to carry out the modernized appeals system and a comparison with historical averages for time required to promulgate regulations of similar complexity and scope.

(14) An outline of the circumstances under which claimants with pending appeals of decisions on legacy claims would be authorized to have their appeals reviewed under the modernized appeals system.

(15) A delineation of the key goals and milestones for reducing the number of pending appeals that are not processed under the modernized appeals system, including the expected number for each of appeals, remands, and hearing requests at the Administration and the Board each year, beginning with the one-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, until there are no longer any appeals pending before the Administration or the Board for a decision on a legacy claim.

(16) The metrics and goals used by the Secretary to monitor the implementation of the modernized appeals system, including with respect to—

(A) tracking progress of such implementation;

(B) evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of such implementation; and

(C) identifying potential issues with respect to such implementation.

(17) A description of each risk factor associated with each element of the plan and a contingency plan to minimize each such risk.

(18) A detailed description of which employees of the Department will conduct higher level reviews under section 5104B of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 2(g).

(c) REVIEW BY COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the Comptroller General of the United States receives the plan required by subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall—

(A) assess such plan in writing; and

(B) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives the findings of the Comptroller General with respect to the assessment conducted under subparagraph (A).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The assessment conducted under paragraph (1)(A) shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of whether the plan comports with sound planning practices.

(B) Identification of any improvements the Comptroller General considers appropriate for the plan.

(C) Formulation of such recommendations as the Comptroller General considers appropriate.

(d) PERIODIC REPORTS.—On a quarterly basis during the period beginning 90 days after the date on which the Secretary submits the plan under subsection (a) and ending on the date that the Secretary implements the modernized appeals system, and on a semiannual basis during the seven-year period following such date of implementation, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives, and the Comptroller General a report on the modernized appeals system. Each such report shall include, with respect to the period covered by the report, the following:

(1) Any updates to the plan under subsection (a).

(2) As applicable, the number of appeals considered under the modernized appeals system, including—

(A) the number of such appeals, both with respect to pending appeals and completed appeals, under each docket described in section 7107 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2;

(B) the average wait time for each such docket and the extent to which such wait times compare with the established goals of the Secretary for such wait times; and

(C) the average age of such appeals.

(3) The number of appeals considered with respect to legacy claims, including—

(A) the number of pending appeals and the number of completed appeals;

(B) the average wait time and the extent to which such wait times compare with the established goals of the Secretary for such wait times; and

(C) the average age of such appeals.

(4) The efficacy of the information systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs to implement the modernized appeals system.

(5) With respect to the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Board of Veterans' Appeals—

(A) the number of supplemental claims under section 5108 of such title, as added by section 2(i), that were denied because the supplemental claims did not include new and relevant evidence;

(B) the number of higher level reviews filed under section 5104B of such title, as added by section 2(g), that did not include new and relevant evidence, listed by the disposition of the higher level review; and

(C) the number of appeals filed that did not include new and relevant evidence, listed by each docket described in section 7107 of such title, as amended by section 2, and the determination of the Board.

(6) With respect to any average wait time relating to appeals not otherwise specified in this subsection—

(A) whether the Secretary is meeting any established wait-time goals of the Secretary; and

(B) if so, the percentage of appeals meeting such goals.

(7) An identification of any changes that are necessary to improve the modernized appeals system.

SEC. 4. PROGRAMS TO TEST ASSUMPTIONS RELIED ON IN DEVELOPMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR PROCESSING OF LEGACY APPEALS AND SUPPORTING MODERNIZED APPEALS SYSTEM.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out such programs as the Secretary considers appropriate to test any assumptions relied upon in developing the comprehensive plan required by section 3(a) and to test the feasibility and advisability of

any facet of the modernized appeals system. The Secretary may not carry out such a program until the Secretary notifies the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives of the program, including the reasons for carrying out the program.

(2) REPORTING REQUIRED.—Whenever the Secretary determines, based on the conduct of a program under paragraph (1), that legislative changes to the modernized appeals system are necessary, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives notice of such determination.

(b) DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROGRAM ON FULLY DEVELOPED APPEALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may, under subsection (a)(1), carry out a program to provide the option of an alternative appeals process that shall more quickly determine such appeals in accordance with this subsection.

(2) ELECTION.—

(A) FILING.—In accordance with subparagraph (B), a claimant may elect to file a fully developed appeal under the program by filing with the Secretary all of the following:

(i) The notice of disagreement under chapter 71 of title 38, United States Code, along with the written election of the claimant to have the appeal determined under the program.

(ii) All evidence that the claimant believes is needed for the appeal as of the date of the filing.

(iii) A statement of the argument in support of the claim, if any.

(B) TIMING.—A claimant shall make an election under subparagraph (A) as part of the notice of disagreement filed by the claimant in accordance with subparagraph (A)(i).

(C) TRIAGE.—The Secretary shall, upon expiration of the period specified in paragraph (3)(C)(iii), ensure that an assessment is undertaken of whether an appeal filed under subparagraph (A) of this paragraph satisfies the requirements for appeal under the program and provide appropriate notification to the claimant of the results of that assessment.

(D) REVERSION.—

(i) ELECTED REVERSION.—At any time, a claimant who makes an election under subparagraph (A) may elect to revert to the standard appeals process. Such a reversion shall be final.

(ii) AUTOMATIC REVERSION.—A claimant described in clause (i), or a claimant who makes an election under subparagraph (A) but is later determined to be ineligible for the program under paragraph (1), shall revert to the standard appeals process without any penalty to the claimant other than the loss of the docket number associated with the fully developed appeal.

(E) OUTREACH.—In providing claimants with notices of the determination of a claim during the period in which the program under paragraph (1) is carried out, the Secretary shall conduct outreach as follows:

(i) The Secretary shall provide to the claimant (and to the representative of record of the claimant, if any) information regarding—

(I) the program, including the advantages and disadvantages of the program;

(II) how to make an election under subparagraph (A);

(III) the limitation on the use of new evidence described in subparagraph (C) of paragraph (3) and the development of information under subparagraph (D) of such paragraph;

(IV) the ability of the claimant to seek advice and education regarding such process from veterans service organizations, attorneys, and claims agents recognized under chapter 59 of title 38, United States Code; and

(V) the circumstances under which the appeal will automatically revert to the standard appeals process, including by making a request for a hearing.

(ii) The Secretary shall collaborate, partner with, and give weight to the advice of the three veterans service organizations with the most members and such other stakeholders as the Secretary considers appropriate to publish on the internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs an online tutorial explaining the advantages and disadvantages of the program.

(3) TREATMENT BY DEPARTMENT AND BOARD.—

(A) PROCESS.—Upon the election of a claimant to file a fully developed appeal pursuant to paragraph (2)(A), the Secretary shall—

(i) not provide the claimant with a statement of the case nor require the claimant to file a substantive appeal; and

(ii) transfer jurisdiction over the fully developed appeal directly to the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

(B) DOCKET.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The Board of Veterans' Appeals shall—

(I) maintain fully developed appeals on a separate docket than standard appeals;

(II) decide fully developed appeals in the order that the fully developed appeals are received on the fully developed appeal docket;

(III) except as provided by clause (ii), decide not more than one fully developed appeal for each four standard appeals decided; and

(IV) to the extent practicable, decide each fully developed appeal by the date that is one year following the date on which the claimant files the notice of disagreement.

(ii) ADJUSTMENT.—Beginning one year after the date on which the program commences, the Board may adjust the number of standard appeals decided for each fully developed appeal under clause (i)(III) if the Board determines that such adjustment is fair for both standard appeals and fully developed appeals.

(C) LIMITATION ON USE OF NEW EVIDENCE.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided by clauses (ii) and (iii)—

(I) a claimant may not submit or identify to the Board of Veterans' Appeals any new evidence relating to a fully developed appeal after filing such appeal unless the claimant reverts to the standard appeals process pursuant to paragraph (2)(D); and

(II) if a claimant submits or identifies any such new evidence, such submission or identification shall be deemed to be an election to make such a reversion pursuant to paragraph (2)(D).

(ii) EVIDENCE GATHERED BY BOARD.—Clause (i) shall not apply to evidence developed pursuant to subparagraphs (D) and (E). The Board shall consider such evidence in the first instance without consideration by the Veterans Benefits Administration.

(iii) REPRESENTATIVE OF RECORD.—The representative of record of a claimant for appeals purposes, if any, shall be provided an opportunity to review the fully developed appeal of the claimant and submit any additional arguments or evidence that the representative determines necessary during a period specified by the Board for purposes of this subparagraph.

(D) PROHIBITION ON REMAND FOR ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT.—If the Board of Veterans' Appeals determines that a fully developed appeal requires Federal records, independent medical opinions, or new medical examinations, the Board shall—

(i) in accordance with subparagraph (E), take such actions as may be necessary to develop such records, opinions, or examinations in accordance with section 5103A of title 38, United States Code;

(ii) retain jurisdiction of the fully developed appeal without requiring a determination by the Veterans Benefits Administration based on such records, opinions, or examinations;

(iii) ensure the claimant, and the representative of record of a claimant, if any, receives a copy of such records, opinions, or examinations; and

(iv) provide the claimant a period of 90 days after the date of mailing such records, opinions, or examinations during which the claimant may provide the Board any additional evidence without requiring the claimant to make a reversion pursuant to paragraph (2)(D).

(E) DEVELOPMENT UNIT.—

(i) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Board of Veterans' Appeals shall establish an office to develop Federal records, independent medical opinions, and new medical examinations pursuant to subparagraph (D)(i) that the Board determines necessary to decide a fully developed appeal.

(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall—

(I) ensure that the Veterans Benefits Administration cooperates with the Board of Veterans' Appeals in carrying out clause (i); and

(II) transfer employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration who, prior to the enactment of this Act, were responsible for processing claims remanded by the Board of Veterans' Appeals to positions within the office of the Board established under clause (i) in a number the Secretary determines sufficient to carry out such subparagraph.

(F) HEARINGS.—Notwithstanding section 7107 of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary may not provide hearings with respect to fully developed appeals under the program. If a claimant requests to hold a hearing pursuant to such section 7107, such request shall be deemed to be an election to revert to the standard appeals process pursuant to paragraph (2)(D).

(4) DURATION; APPLICABILITY.—

(A) DURATION.—Subject to subsection (c), the Secretary may carry out the program during such period as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(B) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply only to fully developed appeals that are filed during the period in which the program is carried out pursuant to subparagraph (A).

(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) COMPENSATION.—The term ''compensation'' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38, United States Code.

(B) FULLY DEVELOPED APPEAL.—The term ''fully developed appeal'' means an appeal of a claim for disability compensation that is—

(i) filed by a claimant in accordance with paragraph (2)(A); and

(ii) considered in accordance with this subsection.

(C) STANDARD APPEAL.—The term ''standard appeal'' means an appeal of a claim for disability compensation that is not a fully developed appeal.

(c) TERMINATION.—The Secretary may not carry out any program under this section after the date on the which the Secretary implements the modernized appeals system.

SEC. 5. PERIODIC PUBLICATION OF METRICS RELATING TO PROCESSING OF APPEALS BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

On the first business day of each month the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish on an internet website of the Department of Veterans Affairs the following:

(1) As applicable, with respect to the processing by the Secretary of appeals under the modernized appeals system of decisions regarding claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary:

(A) For the Veterans Benefits Administration, the number of—

(i) supplemental claims under section 5108 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2(i), that are pending; and

(ii) requests for higher level review under section 5104B of such title, as added by section 2(g), that are pending.

(B) The number of appeals on any docket maintained under section 7107 of such title, as amended by section 2(t), that are pending.

(C) The average duration for processing claims and supplemental claims, disaggregated by regional office.

(D) The average duration for processing requests for higher level review under section 5104B of such title, as added by section 2(g), disaggregated by regional office.

(E) The average number of days that appeals are pending on the nonhearing, no-additional evidence option docket of the Board of Veterans' Appeals maintained pursuant to section 7107 of such title, as amended by section 2(t), and any other docket maintained by the Board under such section that prohibits the submittal of additional evidence.

(F) The average number of days that appeals are pending on dockets maintained under such section in which hearings are requested or submittal of additional evidence is allowed.

(G) The average number of days that an appeal is pending on any other docket maintained by the Board under such section.

(H) In the case that the Secretary develops and implements a policy under section 7107(e) of such title, as amended by section 2(t)—

(i) the number of cases moved from one docket to another pursuant to such policy;

(ii) the average time cases were pending prior to moving from one docket to another; and

(iii) the average time to adjudicate the cases after so moving.

(I) The total number of remands to obtain advisory medical opinions under section 5109(d) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 2(i)(1).

(J) The average number of days between the date on which the Board remands a claim to obtain an advisory medical opinion under section 5109(d) of such title, as so added, and the date on which the advisory medical opinion is obtained.

(K) The average number of days between the date on which the Board remands a claim to obtain an advisory medical opinion under section 5109(d) of such title, as so added, and the date on which the agency of original jurisdiction issues a decision taking that advisory opinion into account.

(L) The number of appeals that are granted, the number of appeals that are remanded, and the number of appeals that are denied by the Board disaggregated by docket.

(M) The number of claimants each year that take action within the period set forth in section 5110(a)(2) of such title, as added by section 2(l), to protect their effective date under such section 5110(a)(2), disaggregated by the status of the claimants taking the actions, such as whether the claimant is represented by a veterans service organization, the claimant is represented by an attorney or accredited agent, or the claimant is taking such action pro se.

(N) The total number of times on average each claimant files under section 5110(a)(2) of such title, as so added, to protect their effective date under such section, disaggregated by the subparagraph of such section under which they file.

(O) The average duration, from the filing of an initial claim until the claim is resolved and claimants no longer take any action to protect their effective date under section 5110(a)(2) of such title, as so added—

(i) of claims under the modernized appeals system, excluding legacy claims that opt in to the modernized appeals system; and

(ii) of legacy claims that opt in to the modernized appeals system.

(P) How frequently an action taken within one year to protect an effective date under section 5110(a)(2) of such title, as so added, leads to additional grant of benefits, disaggregated by action taken.

(Q) The average of how long it takes to complete each segment of the claims process while claimants are protecting the effective date under such section, disaggregated by the time waiting for the claimant to take an action and the time waiting for the Secretary to take an action.

(R) The number and the average amount of retroactive awards of benefits from the Secretary as a result of protected effective dates under such section, disaggregated by action taken.

(S) The average number of times claimants submit to the Secretary different claims with respect to same condition, such as an initial claim and a supplemental claim.

(T) The number of cases each year in which a claimant inappropriately tried to take simultaneous actions, such as filing a supplemental claim while a higher level review is pending, what actions the Secretary took in response, and how long it took on average to take those actions.

(U) In the case that the Secretary develops and implements a policy under section 5104C(a)(2)(D) of such title, as amended by section 2(h)(1), the number of actions withdrawn and new actions taken pursuant to such policy.

(V) The number of times the Secretary received evidence relating to an appeal or higher level review at a time not authorized under the modernized appeals system, disaggregated by actions taken by the Secretary to deal with the evidence and how long on average it took to take those actions.

(W) The number of errors committed by the Secretary in carrying out the Secretary's duty to assist under section 5103A of title 38, United States Code, that were identified by higher level review and by the Board, disaggregated by type of error, such as errors relating to private records and inadequate examinations, and a comparison with errors committed by the Secretary in carrying out such duty with respect to appeals of decisions on legacy claims.

(X) An assessment of the productivity of employees at the regional offices and at the Board, disaggregated by level of experience of the employees.

(2) With respect to the processing by the Secretary of appeals of decisions on legacy claims, the following:

(A) The average duration of each segment of the appeals process, disaggregated by periods in which the Secretary is waiting for a claimant to take an action and periods in which the claimant is waiting for the Secretary to take an action.

(B) The frequency by which appeals lead to additional grant of benefits by the Secretary, disaggregated by whether the additional benefits are a result of additional evidence added after the initial decision.

(C) The number and average amount of retroactive awards of benefits resulting from an appeal.

(D) The average duration from filing the appeal with the Secretary until all appeals and remands relating to such appeals are completed.

(E) The average number of times claimants submit to the Secretary different claims with respect to same condition, such as an initial claim, new and material evidence, or a claim for an increase in benefits.

(F) An assessment of the productivity of employees at the regional offices and at the Board, disaggregated by level of experience of the employees.

(G) The average number of days the duration of an appeal is extended because the Secretary secured or attempted to secure an advisory medical opinion under section 5109 of title 38, United States Code, or section 7109 of such title (as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act).

(3) With respect to the processing by the Secretary of appeals of decisions on legacy claims that opt in to the modernized appeals system, the following:

(A) The cumulative number of such legacy claims.

(B) The portion of work in the modernized appeals system attributable to appeals of decisions on such legacy claims.

(C) The average period such legacy claims were pending before opting in to the modernized appeals system and the average period required to adjudicate such legacy claims on average after opting in—

(i) with respect to claims at a regional office of the Department of Veterans Affairs, disaggregated by—

(I) supplemental claims under section 5108 of title 38, United States Code, as amended by section 2(i); and

(II) requests for higher level review under section 5104B of such title, as added by section 2(g); and

(ii) with respect to appeals, disaggregated by docket of the Board maintained under section 7107 of such title, as amended by section 2(t).

SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) The term ''claimant'' has the meaning given such term in section 5100 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) The term ''legacy claim'' means a claim—

(A) that was submitted to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for a benefit under a law administered by the Secretary; and

(B) for which notice of a decision under section 5104 of title 38, United States Code, was provided by the Secretary before the date set forth in section 2(x)(1).

(3) The term ''opt in'' means, with respect to a legacy claim of a claimant, that the claimant elects to subject the claim to the modernized appeals system pursuant to—

(A) section 2(x)(3); or

(B) such other mechanism as the Secretary may prescribe for purposes of carrying out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

(4) The term ''modernized appeals system'' means the set of processes and mechanisms by which the Secretary processes, pursuant to the authorities and requirements modified by section 2, claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days within

which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 2288, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2288, as amended.

First, I want to thank the Disabilities Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee Chairman BOST and Ranking Member ESTY for their hard work in bringing H.R. 2288 to the floor. I also want to thank every member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, both Republican and Democrat, who all are original cosponsors of this bill.

The committee has been working on overhauling the VA's appeals process, which was established back in 1933. The problem is that the current system is slow, cumbersome, frustrating, and full of bureaucratic red tape. As a result, there are currently 470,000 veterans, many of whom may have been injured in the line of duty, who are waiting for a decision on their appeal. Many of these folks have been waiting for more than 5 years, and veterans are filing more appeals every day.

Last year, VA Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson testified that if Congress doesn't pass reform soon, by 2027, veterans may have to wait as long as 10 years to get a decision on their appeal. Think about that. In 2027, men and women who served our Nation may have to wait a decade to get a decision on their appeal.

These veterans have bills to pay and families to support. Even worse, they may need medical treatments that they can't get from the VA because their appeal hasn't been decided.

Mr. Speaker, one of the dearest friends I have had in my life died a little over 2 years ago, waiting on a decision on an appeal.

H.R. 2288 would help streamline the VA's appeals process, while giving veterans more options and protecting their due process rights. This legislation includes a compromise agreement that was reached between VA and the veterans service organizations which passed the House last Congress as part of H.R. 5620.

We have added a few improvements since last year. For example, we have expanded the bill to allow some veterans who are currently having pending appeals to opt in to the new system. I really believe that the changes in this bill will make a difference and help expedite the process so that veterans can get a decision on their appeal and then get on with their lives.

I am going to pull out all the stops to get this bill on the President's desk as soon as possible. We are talking with our colleagues in the Senate, including Chairman ISAKSON, Ranking Member TESTER, and Senator BLUMENTHAL, to resolve a few minor differences between the House version and the Senate version.

The sooner we get this bill passed, the sooner our Nation's veterans will be able to get their decisions on appeal in a timely manner. Veterans deserve no less.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to support H.R. 2288, as amended, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the manager's amendment to H.R. 2288, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017. This has truly proven to be a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform the disability claims process for the benefit of our Nation's veterans.

I want to specifically thank Chairman ROE for bringing this bill to the floor today and for ensuring that the entire process that got us here was open, fair, bipartisan, and followed regular order. It is gratefully appreciated, and I think we end up with a good piece of legislation because of his leadership.

I also want to recognize the efforts of our colleagues, the chairman of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, Mr. BOST. He has been an incredible addition to the VA committee and dug his heels in on this one and got us this far, so I thank him; and to his counterpart on our side of the aisle, Ranking Member ESTY, for exceptional work that they have done together to get this bill to the floor.

I would also like to thank our veterans service organizations. This is how I think the American people think legislation should be brought; on issues at hand, experts are brought in, Representatives talk. The expertise that was brought by the VSOs helped us work out some of the kinks. It is not perfect, but the coalition got us to a point where I think many of us are comfortable moving forward.

The bill is complicated. To those who still have concerns in the process, let us know. There is still work to be done. It is still working in the Senate, but there is an openness that has been expressed through the entire process.

Secretary Shulkin and the VA leadership have been vital in this effort. They helped pull the stakeholders together, providing the technical expertise to help us understand what it takes over the past several years.

I want to recognize our former colleague on the committee, DINA TITUS. She is going to be speaking a little bit later, but I think what is so important on veterans issues, members come and go from the committee, but their commitment to getting this right stays. And her tenaciousness in the 114th Congress laid the groundwork for this.

So in short, Mr. Speaker, as you heard the chairman say, there are 470,000 veterans. Each one of them is an individual. Each one of them is someone's friend, father, mother, sister, brother. It is time we peel back the layers of the complicated rules governing the process, modernize it with new technology, and get the benefits delivered in a timely manner to those who have earned them. I support the manager's amendment to H.R. 2288 and encourage all my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), chairman of the DAMA Subcommittee.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bipartisan legislation, H.R. 2288, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, as amended. The legislation is a product of hard work between the Department of Veterans Affairs, veterans service organizations, committee staff, and committee members.

This bill gives veterans more options when pursuing the appeals claim by creating three pathways or lanes: Lane one allows for the veteran to request that a new individual review their case without a hearing, which will allow a faster response time from the VA on their appeal; lane two allows a veteran to request a hearing; and lane three sends the appeal directly to the Board of Veterans Appeals. These three lanes, working together, will speed up the process for our Nation's veterans and ensure that the appeals system works for them.

An important compromise in this legislation also allows for veterans to keep the original effective date of their claim as long as they filed the necessary paperwork within 1 year of a VA's decision. This is another way to ensure that the appeals system is working for the veterans. It is important that we do not leave any veteran behind.

My colleagues and I have worked to ensure that some of the more than 470,000 veterans with a current appeal in the system will have the opportunity at certain points to opt into the new system. This will help the veterans who have been waiting for years to hear from the VA.

This bill also ensures transparency in the VA implementation. This new system, by requiring rigorous reports from the Department, ensures that all veterans are treated fairly.

In closing, I especially want to recognize and thank the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs ranking member, Ms. ESTY, for her hard work and help in crafting this legislation.

I encourage all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2288, as amended.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 6 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY), my good friend, ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee.

Ms. ESTY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2288, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, as amended.

First, I want to thank our excellent chairman, Dr. ROE, and ranking member, Mr. WALZ, for their dedication and hard work. It has been a pleasure to work on this important legislation during my first term as ranking member of the Veterans Affairs' Committee Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee.

I want to give special thanks to my new friend, our subcommittee chairman, Mr. BOST, for his leadership on this issue and for ensuring that the legislative process was bipartisan at every turn.

I want to acknowledge and thank Congresswoman DINA TITUS for her leadership on this issue, as she helped pass similar legislation that formed the basis for our work here in this Congress.

Mr. Speaker, claims appeals are backing up. Veterans in Connecticut and across the country are waiting for far too long for the benefits they have earned through their hard service to this country.

When a veteran asks my office for help appealing their claim, it is frustrating and embarrassing to have to explain that the process could take more than 5 years. The backlog will only get worse if we do not reform the process. Some veterans could be waiting as long as 10 years, as we have heard from Chairman ROE and from Ranking Member WALZ, if we don't reform things now.

With the new process created under this bill, if it is properly implemented, many veterans would see a clearer, definitive appeals decision in as little as a year. I have seen in Connecticut that, when an appeal is granted, it can change the way a veteran lives. But it is also proof to that veteran that their service is being honored.

That is why it is so unacceptable that the current process is failing so many veterans. It forces them to navigate layers of red tape and duplicative review. The slow grinding of the appeals process chips away at our veterans' faith that they will ever be fairly compensated for injuries that they sustained in service to our country.

Our goal with this bill is to establish a new process that is simple, fair, transparent, and, wherever possible, speedy.

As we have heard, there are 470,000—yes, 470,000—veterans with disability appeals pending right now, and that is something we should be able to address, Democrats and Republicans, without regard to party. We owe a faster, better appeals process not only to our veterans who have served, but to those who wear the uniform right now.

Our men and women in uniform deserve to know that the benefits that they have been promised when they signed up will be there for them if, God forbid, something happens to them and they are injured in serving our country.

I would like to thank all of the veterans and veterans service organizations who shared their ideas and their concerns with us as we worked hard to craft this legislation. Voices from the veterans community were invaluable as we developed this bill and will be essential as we move forward to ensure that the new process works well.

I also want to thank the VA itself for having been such a good partner in this effort. It is important to remember that this is just the first step towards reforming the appeals process. If this bill is going to be successful, it will require a lot of work from our committee, from the VA, oversight by Congress, and we must take care to ensure that legacy appeals do not get lost in the process. Congress must also provide the resources necessary for the new appeals system to work well for our veterans.

I want to thank, again, Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for making reforming the appeals system a top priority of the committee for this year and for their dedication working together in a bipartisan way.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation and to commit to keep working together to get the job done.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DUNN), an active member on the committee and a veteran.

Mr. DUNN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2288, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017.

This important legislation will update and streamline the bureaucratic nightmare that is the disability appeals process. This bill breaks appeals down into three lanes to expedite decisionmaking and improves the ability of veterans to offer new information about their condition. The bill requires Secretary Shulkin to provide a comprehensive plan of how he plans to implement the crucial changes which are supported by both the VFW and the American Legion.

Our men and women in uniform served with the assurance that they would be well treated when they came home. They earned and they deserve timely service from their government. Instead, veterans wait years to hear from an out-of-date, backlogged appeals system. Sometimes that process takes 5 years—5 years. That is an insult to their service, and it is an insult that we cannot tolerate.

Our veterans fought for their country abroad. Now it is our job to ensure that they don't have another fight when they come home. Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), my friend and the vice ranking member of the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I thank my ranking member, Mr. WALZ, for yielding time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2288 the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017.

Over the past 5 years, the number of pending appeals at the VA has skyrocketed by 40 percent and now sits at nearly half a million cases. The average processing time for an appeal is 3 years. Republicans and Democrats agree, the VA agrees, veterans service organizations agree, and, most importantly, veterans agree that we need to fix this broken process.

I am pleased that my colleagues on the committee have come together to develop a bipartisan solution that reduces the overly complicated appeals process, shortens the time a veteran will wait for a decision, and preserves a veteran's full length of benefits if their appeal is decided favorably.

This legislation has taken a lot of time and effort. I applaud my colleagues Ms. TITUS and Mr. Miller for laying the groundwork in the last Congress, and Ms. ESTY and Mr. BOST for carrying this legislation into the 115th Congress.

I am very, very proud of all the work done by the committee staff to bring this together, and I am grateful to the dedicated VSOs and the VA for their input. This is a great example of how we can put aside our partisan differences and make our veterans' lives better.

Mr. Speaker, I support this bill and urge all of my colleagues to vote for it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Puerto Rico (Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN), a new member of our committee and the only representative from Puerto Rico.

Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico. Mr. Speaker, today I must first thank Chairman ROE for all of his leadership and work on behalf of our veterans. I also thank Representative BOST and all of our committee members for allowing me to contribute to this effort.

Today I rise to support H.R. 2288, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act. This bill will provide timely justice to the brave Americans who gave their best in the name of democracy, freedom, and the continuing greatness of our Nation.

As the sole representative of more than 93,000 registered veterans in Puerto Rico, I established a Veterans Affairs Task Force, and one of the main complaints they have is about the Veterans Administration's and Board of Veterans Appeals' slow processing of their claims.

I believe every veterans service organization hears similar complaints. The most recent statistics reveal a 5,000-case backlog for claims originally filed by Puerto Rican veterans. One such Puerto Rican claim has gone on for over 12 years, other claims for over 5

years. As of this date, the veterans are still waiting for the Board of Veterans Appeals' decisions. This is not the justice system our veterans deserve.

I am a proud sponsor of this bill, and this bill will provide heroic veterans a system that is adjusted to their needs.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA), my good friend and, more importantly, a friend to all veterans, a new member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member WALZ.

Mr. Speaker, first, I want to thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for giving me the opportunity to share my enthusiastic support for this bill, H.R. 2288. I also want to thank Mr. BOST and Ms. ESTY for their remarkable leadership in guiding this legislation to the floor and for taking the steps to finally fix the appeals process.

I stand here today to support the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act. This legislation reforms the VA appeals process so that our veterans can begin to receive the benefits they have earned through their dedication to our country.

Veterans in California and all across America, including those in my district, currently face a backlog of sometimes more than 5 years to get their benefits. This is not acceptable, and that is why I am pleased to support this bipartisan legislation.

A veteran who files a disability claim for an injury that they sustained during their military service is issued a VA rating decision, which either grants or denies a claim. If a veteran disagrees with the outcome, they may appeal the VA's decision and then wait and wait and wait. This bill will improve the process by creating a multiple appeal streams, which will accelerate the process.

Our veterans who suffered injury during their time in service can now be assured that they will be one step closer to having their appeals cases reviewed and decided in a timely manner.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO), a former member of our committee.

□ 1500

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, this bill will improve the appeals process at the Department of Veterans Affairs, which is currently operating under a significant backlog.

Last session, when I served on the VA Committee, a major focus was reforming the repeals process to better serve veterans' appeals rights. My office has assisted hundreds of veterans, many of whom have struggled with the appeals process and several of whom have struggled with getting the care they need in a timely manner.

One individual my office worked with estimated the entire process, from when he first began seeking benefits until the recent favorable decision from the Board of Veterans Appeals, lasted 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear a solution is needed.

This legislation would set out to improve the claims process by providing veterans with three lanes—or three choices—as to how they would like to proceed with an appeal.

These choices include: one, having the original evidence reviewed again; or, two, introducing new evidence and having another hearing; or, three, sending the decision directly to the Board of Veterans Appeals.

The VA's current 5-year appeal wait time is simply not acceptable for our veterans.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of this legislation, which is an appropriate solution to this problem. It will streamline many claims and also enable a more efficient administrative handling of those claims.

I thank the leadership of Chairman ROE and those on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2288.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS), a good friend and former ranking member of the Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee, and someone who has worked on this almost longer than anyone in the House.

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Ranking Member WALZ for his leadership, for bringing this bill, and for allowing me to stay involved even though I am no longer on the committee. Likewise, I thank Dr. ROE for all that he has done for veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in very strong support of H.R. 2288, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act.

Fixing this outdated system was one of my top priorities while I served as ranking member of the VA Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Subcommittee. When I assumed that position, much of the focus was on the VA disability claims backlog, which had ballooned, causing many veterans to wait almost 2 years just for their initial claim decision. After that backlog was addressed and reduced, the problem shifted to the appeals process, where today, as you have heard, almost 470,000 veterans are currently waiting in an overburdened and overcomplicated system that was first developed in the 1930s and last updated in the 1980s.

I regularly hear from my veteran constituents who are stuck in this appeals process about the need for reform. One veteran we are helping in Las Vegas has been working since August of 2013 to have his appeal adjudicated; and another Nevada veteran who, out of desperation, came to my office, took 4 years to complete his process.

So, obviously, the current system is just unacceptable. If we don't act, it is only going to get worse. We have heard statistics that soon veterans may be waiting for more than a decade just to have their appeals adjudicated.

Last year, working closely with the VA, with the committee, and with many of our partners in the VSO community, I introduced legislation to address this outdated process. I am very proud that my proposal is the basis for the legislation we are considering today.

The changes that were made to that legislation are positive additions, and I appreciate the work that Chairman BOST and Ranking Member ESTY have done to improve the bill and bring it to the floor.

I encourage all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to come together to recognize, to help, to assist our veterans, and support this bill. I want us to tell our friends in the Senate: You have got to act quickly, too. We have got to get this done.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Again, I applaud all the work that was done on behalf of our veterans and those that are waiting. I thank the professional staff on both sides of the aisle for doing that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank this House for proving to the American people that we can work together for a common good. We can make improvements and we can move things along as they are meant to be.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I, too, want to echo what Mr. WALZ has said. It has been a pleasure to work on this and what has been done in the previous Congress. I think this is one of the most important bills that we voted on in the Veterans' Affairs Committee since I have been in Congress. It is the thing we hear about back home, Mr. Speaker, which is disability claims. I think this actually will speed up that process and adjudicate those claims.

I, too, thank all the staff and both subcommittee chairs and ranking members for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, once again, I urge all Members to support H.R. 2288, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2288, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

VA SCHEDULING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 467) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 467

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''VA Scheduling Accountability Act''.

SEC. 2. COMPLIANCE WITH SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) ANNUAL CERTIFICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the director of each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs annually certifies to the Secretary that the medical facility is in full compliance with all provisions of law and regulations relating to scheduling appointments for veterans to receive hospital care and medical services, including pursuant to Veterans Health Administration Directive 2010–027, or any successor directive.

(2) PROHIBITION ON WAIVER.—The Secretary may not waive any provision of the laws or regulations described in paragraph (1) for a medical facility of the Department if such provision otherwise applies to the medical facility.

(b) EXPLANATION OF NONCOMPLIANCE.—If a director of a medical facility of the Department does not make a certification under subsection (a)(1) for any year, the director shall submit to the Secretary a report containing—

(1) an explanation of why the director is unable to make such certification; and

(2) a description of the actions the director is taking to ensure full compliance with the laws and regulations described in such subsection.

(c) PROHIBITION ON BONUSES BASED ON NONCOMPLIANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If a director of a medical facility of the Department does not make a certification under subsection (a)(1) for any year, each covered official described in paragraph (2) may not receive an award or bonus under chapter 45 or 53 of title 5, United States Code, or any other award or bonus authorized under such title or title 38, United States Code, during the year following the year in which the certification was not made.

(2) COVERED OFFICIAL.—A covered official described in this paragraph is each official who serves in the following positions at a medical facility of the Department during a year, or portion thereof, for which the director does not make a certification under subsection (a)(1):

(A) The director.

(B) The chief of staff.

(C) The associate director.

(D) The associate director for patient care.

(E) The deputy chief of staff.

(d) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall annually submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representative and the Senate a report containing, with respect to the year covered by the report—

(1) a list of each medical facility of the Department for which a certification was made under subsection (a)(1); and

(2) a list of each medical facility of the Department for which such a certification was not made, including a copy of each report submitted to the Secretary under subsection (b).

SEC. 3. STANDARDIZED APPLICATION OF DIRECTIVES AND POLICIES OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that the directives and policies of the Department of Veterans Affairs apply to, and are implemented by, each office or facility of the Department in a standardized manner, including such offices and facilities at the local level.

(b) NOTIFICATION.—If the Secretary does not apply and implement the directives and policies of the Department in a standardized manner pursuant to subsection (a), including by waiving such a directive or policy with respect to an office or facility of the Department, the Secretary shall notify the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate of such nonstandardized application or implementation, including an explanation for the nonstandardized application or implementation, as the case may be.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 467, a bill that would codify the VA's own directives for outpatient scheduling into law.

In June of 2010, the Veterans Health Administration issued VHA Directive 2010–27, VHA Outpatient Scheduling Processes and Procedures. This directive requires VHA facility directors to annually certify that their facility is in full compliance with the scheduling procedures outlined within the directive.

It is important to note that this directive was issued 4 years before the scheduling scandal at the Phoenix VA broke, with no less than 40 veterans dying while being kept on secret lists, waiting for an appointment. I believe this directive was a responsible way for the VA to ensure that veterans were receiving the care that they came to the VA for and were not slipping through the cracks.

Unfortunately, in May of 2013, then-Deputy Under Secretary for Health at the VA waived this requirement for the VA medical facility directors to adhere to the directive. As we now know, this waiver helped cover a practice of malfeasance within scheduling departments at VA medical facilities across the Nation.

As I mentioned before, in 2014, the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, with my friend, former Chairman Jeff Miller at the helm, discovered secret waiting lists at the Phoenix VA, as well as many other medical centers across the country. Had this directive still been in place, I honestly believe the scandal could have been prevented.

Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that these scheduling processes do not and cannot be dismissed by VA bureaucrats ever again.

I thank my good friend and former committee member, Representative JACKIE WALORSKI from Indiana, for sponsoring this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 467, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I associate myself with the comments of Chairman ROE and I support H.R. 467. I also thank the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI) for crafting this. She was, and still remains, a staunch supporter of veterans, always advocating for them. She taught me much, including, I think, the definition of Hoosier. I am still a little confused on that one, but we are working on it.

By holding the VA leadership accountable, we can ensure that the VA is accessible to all veterans. While the VA has made progress to shorten wait times, we cannot rest on our laurels. If one veteran's health is compromised because she or he was unable to receive timely care, then the VA has failed in its mission.

Mr. Speaker, for that reason, I ask my colleagues to stand in support of Mrs. WALORSKI's bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the vice chair and one of the most active members of the committee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mrs. WALORSKI doing an outstanding job with this bill. The chairman and the ranking member are champions of veterans.

Again, I rise today in support of H.R. 467, the VA Scheduling Accountability Act, because all veterans deserve timely access to quality health care.

In 2014, the House Veterans' Affairs Committee uncovered the use of unauthorized waiting lists at the Phoenix VA healthcare system in Phoenix, Arizona. As a result of these waiting lists, no less than 40 veterans died while waiting for care.

This is unacceptable. It is heartbreaking and completely, as I said, unacceptable. These are true American heroes, and we cannot allow something like this to ever happen again.

Our investigations found that noncompliance with the VA's scheduling

policies was a widespread and systematic problem. This bill today requires that all VA medical center directors certify each year that their facility is in compliance with the scheduling directive. If a VA medical center is found noncompliant, H.R. 476 will hold those leaders accountable.

Our bill makes certain that those who fail in their duty to serve our veterans will not be receiving bonuses or awards anytime soon. Lack of oversight, lack of accountability, and lack of transparency led to the 2014 wait-times crisis. The VA Scheduling Accountability Act will help ensure those mistakes are not repeated, and improve access to timely care for our Nation's heroes.

Again, I thank the sponsor of the bill, Mrs. WALORSKI. It is one of the most important bills that we will pass this year, in my opinion, and I urge its passage.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), the sponsor of the bill and a former member of the committee.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ. What an honor it is to work with these two gentlemen on veterans' issues.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my bill, H.R. 467, the VA Scheduling Accountability Act.

This commonsense legislation codifies an important measure of oversight and accountability of VA facilities to prevent scheduling manipulation or, in the vernacular, ''cooking the books,'' that has harmed veterans for so long.

Hearings held by the House VA Committee and investigations by the VA inspector general and the GAO have, unfortunately, confirmed many of the allegations of cooking books and falsified wait-time data at facilities around the country.

The VA has a procedure for scheduling veterans' medical appointments, which includes 19 different items, such as ensuring that a patient's desired appointment date is not altered and that staff are fully trained. Importantly, the directive requires each facility to certify compliance with all of these 19 items every year.

However, an August 2014 VA inspector general report uncovered that, in May 2013, a senior VA official waived the certification requirement that year, essentially putting the facility on an honor system, allowing them to self-certify.

Without this crucial accountability mechanism, bad actors were given free rein to manipulate wait-time data and ignore the VA's required scheduling practices. Meanwhile, veterans faced significant delays in getting the care they needed while, in some extreme cases, veterans died.

Since that time, the VA has reinstated the certification requirements. However, serious problems remain, as evidenced by a recent VA investigation of a clinic in my own district that I requested after some brave individuals came forward with allegations of wrongdoing.

□ 1515

The VA found that the clinic scheduled appointments for veterans without the veterans' knowledge and canceled them on the day of the appointment in order to fill their schedule for that day. If the VA had conducted proper audits of that facility's scheduling practices last year, this misconduct could have been prevented. The VA's report recommended a review of scheduling compliance for all medical facilities in the region.

The VA's continued inability to reform itself from within is the reason we need to pass this bill. This bill will require each facility director to annually certify compliance with the current scheduling directive or any successive directive that replaces it, and, most importantly, it will prohibit any future waivers. The bill also provides accountability by making a director ineligible for salary bonuses if their facility fails to certify compliance, and it requires the VA to report to Congress a list of these facilities that are not in compliance. This will provide more oversight of the VA, ensure that Congress is aware of noncompliant facilities, and end the reckless practice of self-certification.

Mr. Speaker, our veterans risked life and limb for our freedom, but too often the VA has let them down. It is time to put an end to this scheduling manipulation—the cooking of the books—and the false wait-time data.

Holding every VA facility accountable for following scheduling rules is an important, commonsense step as we work to fix the VA so it works for the veterans in our country.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 467, the VA Scheduling Accountability Act.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, again, I thank the gentlewoman from Indiana for her passion and for the chairman to bring this commonsense accountability piece to the floor.

I encourage my colleagues to support it, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, once again, I encourage all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 467.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR VETERANS

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1005) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1005

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PROVISION OF ADULT DAY HEALTH CARE SERVICES FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1745 of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(d)(1) The Secretary shall enter into an agreement under section 1720(c)(1) of this title or a contract with each State home for payment by the Secretary for adult day health care provided to a veteran who is eligible for, but does not receive, nursing home care pursuant to subsection (a).

''(2) Payment under each agreement or contract between the Secretary and a State home under paragraph (1) for each veteran who receives care under such paragraph shall be made at a rate that is equal to 65 percent of the payment that the Secretary would pay to the State home pursuant to subsection (a)(2) if the veteran received nursing home care under subsection (a) rather than under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

''(3) Payment by the Secretary under paragraph (1) to a State home for adult day health care provided to a veteran described in that paragraph constitutes payment in full to the State home for such care furnished to that veteran.''; and

(2) in the heading, by inserting ''**, adult day health care,**'' after ''**home care**''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 17 of such title is amended by striking the item relating to section 1745 and inserting the following new item:

''1745. Nursing home care, adult day health care, and medications for veterans with service-connected disabilities.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1005, a bill to improve the provision of adult day healthcare services for veterans.

Last year, the Department of Veterans Affairs testified that 9.8 million veterans, or 46 percent of the veteran population, will be 65 years of age or older in 2017. Given that, the need to ensure that veterans have ready access to a variety of geriatric and long-term care services and supports is an increasingly important component of the VA's mission.

Current law requires the VA to cover the cost of nursing home care in a State Veterans Home for any veteran in need of such care due to a service-connected disability or with a service-connected disability rating of 70 percent or more. That authority is incredibly important and has helped thousands of our veterans get the nursing home care they need.

However, there is an increasing demand for VA to offer geriatric and long-term care programs in noninstitutional settings that would allow aging veterans to receive needed services and supports while remaining in their homes surrounded by their loved ones.

To that end, H.R. 1005 would require VA to enter into an agreement or a contract with State Veterans Homes to pay for adult day healthcare for a veteran who is eligible for but not receiving nursing home care.

Adult day healthcare programs are a popular alternative to nursing home care that provide veterans in need of case management, assistance with activities of daily living, or other supportive services with companionship, peer support, recreation, and certain healthcare services. They also provide needed respite for caregivers.

By requiring VA to cover the cost of adult day healthcare programs at State Veterans Homes for veterans who would otherwise qualify for VA-paid nursing home care, H.R. 1005 would expand access to this type of care, which has been shown to maximize a veteran's independence and quality of life and to extend an aging veteran's ability to remain at home, which I think we would all want to do.

This bill has the support of the National Association of State Veterans Homes, The American Legion, the Disabled American Veterans, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States.

I am grateful to my friend and former committee member, LEE ZELDIN from New York, for sponsoring this legislation and for shepherding it to the House floor. I look forward to working with him and our colleagues in the Senate to secure a quick passage over there as well.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1005, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of Congressman ZELDIN's bill, H.R. 1005. This legislation is a timely solution to a problem that affects many of our aging veteran populations. Nursing homes are often a family's last resort, and I believe that is the way it should remain. By allowing veterans to receive daily care and assistance at a nursing home and then return to their homes at night, veterans will receive the care, medical support, and attention they need without sacrificing the community family support and independence they want.

For that reason, I ask my colleagues to support this really smart piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN) who is a former member of our committee and sponsor of this legislation.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1005, a bill which would provide no-cost medical model adult day healthcare at State Veterans Homes to veterans who are 70 percent or more service-connected disabled.

This bill is an extension to the Veterans Benefits, Healthcare, and Information Technology Act of 2006, which currently provides no-cost nursing home care at any State Veterans Home to veterans who are 70 percent or more service-connected disabled.

Medical model adult day healthcare provides comprehensive medical, nursing, and personal care services combined with engaging social activities for physically or cognitively impaired adults. Medical model adult day healthcare offers a complete array of rehabilitative therapies, including physical, occupational, and speech therapies, hospice and palliative care, social work, spiritual, nutritional counseling, and therapeutic recreation.

The program is designed to promote socialization and stimulation and maximize the participant's independence while enhancing their quality of life. The program is staffed by a team of multidisciplinary healthcare professionals who evaluate each participant and customize an individualized plan of care specific to their health and social needs.

Adult day healthcare is an alternative care setting that can allow some veterans who require long-term care services to remain in their homes rather than be institutionalized in a nursing home. Such veterans typically require support for some, but not all, activities of daily living—ADLs—such as bathing, dressing, or feeding. In many cases, a spouse or other family member may provide the veteran with much of their care, but they require additional support for some of the veteran's ADLs. By filling these gaps, adult day healthcare can allow these veterans to remain in their homes and communities for additional months or even years and thereby lower the financial cost of caring for these heroes.

Adult day healthcare also provides family caregivers support and relief. Adult day healthcare programs can help caregivers to meet their other professional and family obligations or provide a well-deserved respite while their loved ones are participating in the program.

I would like to thank Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ for their leadership and support on this issue. Also, I would like to thank the House Veterans' Affairs Committee and the great staff for recognizing the need for this critical legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this is a piece of legislation I would encourage all of our colleagues to support.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO) who is a former member of our committee.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of legislation that would assist veterans in Pennsylvania's Sixth Congressional District who suffer from a service-connected disability.

H.R. 1005 would allow the Department of Veterans Affairs to work with State Veterans Homes, such as the Southeastern Veterans Center in my district in East Vincent Township in Chester County, Pennsylvania, to fund adult day healthcare for veterans who have a disability rating of 70 percent or more from the line of duty.

Making this program available to more veterans who need assistance with daily tasks, such as bathing, dressing, or eating, would help improve the lives of those who have sacrificed so much, as well as their families.

Our veterans and their loved ones deserve to receive high-quality health services with the freedom and flexibility to live independently and at home.

I commend Congressman ZELDIN for his leadership and all those on the Veterans' Affairs Committee for passing this out of committee. I am proud to be a cosponsor of this bill, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join me in passing H.R. 1005, and I yield back the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1005.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Once again, I urge all Members to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1005.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NO HERO LEFT UNTREATED ACT

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1162) to direct the Secretary

of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to veterans.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1162

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''No Hero Left Untreated Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy has successfully treated more than 400 veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction.

(2) Recent clinical trials and randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind studies have produced promising measurable outcomes in the evolution of magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy.

(3) The outcomes described in paragraph (2) have resulted in escalating demand from returning members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are seeking access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy.

(4) Congress recognizes the importance of initiating innovative pilot programs that demonstrate the use and effectiveness of new treatment options for post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction.

SEC. 3. MAGNETIC EEG/EKG-GUIDED RESONANCE THERAPY PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) PILOT PROGRAM.—Commencing not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to treat veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, or opiate addiction.

(b) LOCATIONS.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) at not more than two facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) PARTICIPANTS.—In carrying out the pilot program under subsection (a), the Secretary shall provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to not more than 50 veterans.

(d) DURATION.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under subsection (a) for a one-year period.

(e) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the termination of the pilot program under subsection (d), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the pilot program.

(f) NO AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—No additional amounts are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the requirements of this section. Such requirements shall be carried out using amounts authorized under provisions of law other than this section.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1162, a bill to expand the use of EEG/EKG-guided magnetic resonance therapy to treat veterans with PTSD, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction at VA medical centers.

A 2016 VA report found that mental health conditions and substance abuse among veterans is alarmingly high and steadily on the rise, up from 27 percent in 2001 to over 40 percent in 2014. Perhaps even more alarming, the same report showed that VA has increased its use of prescription opioids by 259 percent over the same period to treat these invisible wounds.

Magnetic resonance therapy, or MRT, is an emerging technology that has been used to treat over 400 veterans with symptoms of their mental conditions. MRT uses quantitative electroencephalogram, electrocardiogram technology to target the affected areas of the brain and apply repetitive magnetic stimulation to return normal function to those areas.

MRT has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration to treat depression, and a 2015 study found that veterans who underwent 2 weeks of treatment for PTSD reported an average of 47.4 percent reduction in symptom severity. After 4 weeks of treatment, veteran participants saw a 64 percent reduction in symptom severity on average. The same study showed zero reports of worsening symptoms or adverse effects from the treatment.

H.R. 1162 would create a 1-year pilot at two VA facilities during which 50 veterans would be provided MRT treatment for PTSD, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opioid addiction.

□ 1530

Ninety days after the end of the pilot, the Secretary of the VA would issue a report to Congress on the efficacy of the pilot.

Mr. Speaker, with such promising results from preliminary tests of MRT technology, I believe that we must act quickly to make this emerging technology available to more veterans suffering from the invisible wounds of war.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT), my good friend and fellow Army veteran, for sponsoring this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1162, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1162. With all of the things that you heard the chairman talk about and substance abuse disorder on the rise, the VA should continue to explore the benefits of alternative treatments and how best to provide care to our veterans.

Medical providers must think outside of the box and find effective ways to treat the symptoms a veteran is experiencing, and do so in a way that does not compromise a veteran's health, relationships, and progress towards a successful transition home.

Mr. Speaker, for this reason, I would ask my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation and start moving in a direction that serves our veterans with the best treatment for them.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT), the sponsor of this bill.

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman and the ranking member for their leadership on all veteran issues.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act. I rise today to stand with our Nation's veterans for whom the trauma from the battlefield does not always appear. Whether it is PTS, TBI, MST, chronic pain, or opioid drugs addiction, the pilot program established by this bill would provide an innovative individualized treatment for all-too-common diagnoses that our veterans face today.

Using a suite of FDA-approved medical tools, the magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy, or MeRT, is a nonpharmaceutical and noninvasive procedure that has already shown great promise. This bill requires the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish the pilot program, treat 50 veterans using MeRT at two different VA locations, and then come back with a report at the end of that.

Already at the Brain Treatment Center in California, 98 percent of veterans in recent trials have experienced at least a 10-point change in their military PTSD checklist, or PCL-M, which ranges from 17 to 80.

The Active-Duty military has already begun clinical trials using the MeRT procedure at Tinker Air Force Base, concluding that ''transcranial MeRT is a promising adjuvant treatment modality to help veterans suffering from PTSD.'' In fact, after 4 weeks of active treatment, MeRT reduced the average PCL-M score from 66 to 37.

U.S. Special Operations Command has also funded their own trials using the Brain Treatment Center's treatment modality and is conducting research at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida and Naval Special Warfare Command in my home State of California.

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD letters of support for H.R. 1162 from AMVETS, the Veterans Health Council, the Association of the United States Navy, Veterans Advantage, The Patriot Project, Lines for Life, the National Foundation for Women Legislators, the PsychArmor Institute, STEADFAST Leadership, and the WestCare Foundation.

AMVETS,
Lanham, MD, April 5, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: AMVETS (American Veterans) is pleased to support your bill, H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act, which seeks to establish a pilot program for two Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers to treat fifty veterans using magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy.

Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy has successfully treated more than 400 veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction. This small pilot would be instructive to VA in understanding the benefits and deciding whether to offer this promising therapy to those receiving VA health care.

If it were fully understood how to treat these nuanced disorders and health issues, VA would already be doing so—and suffice it to say—the veteran suicide rate would most assuredly be lower than it is now. It is imperative that we, as a nation, look at new ways to help those who have stood up and walked the walk, and suffer the consequences day after day.

AMVETS is in full support of this measure and appreciates your leadership in introducing this important legislation and in striving to improve the lives of all veterans.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH R. CHENELLY,
Executive Director.

VETERANS HEALTH COUNCIL,
Silver Spring, MD, February 21, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: I am writing in support of the H.R. No Heroes Left Untreated Act. This important piece of legislation will bring to America's Veterans a significant contribution toward health solutions for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), chronic pain and opiate drug addiction through MeRT (Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided Resonance Therapy).

As of early 2015, the effects of collective failure to adequately address the emotional and physical effects of combat; particularly Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI), mild Traumatic Brain Injuries (mTBI), and PTSD have left the Veteran community paying a disproportionate toll for their service to the Nation. Current treatment modalities clearly have limited utility. The urgency of understanding and responding to this national issue becomes more obvious, when one sees the growing scope, impact and prevalence of PTSD, both in Veteran suicides and in related societal indicators. While some may view this as a societal cost that cannot be averted, that is not the view of the doctors at the Newport Brain Research Lab/Brain Treatment Center (NBRL/BTC). MeRT brings a novel neuromodulation approach achieving unprecedented success rates in both open-label trial and randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind studies. To date, over 98% of Veteran PTSD/TBI patients have responded positively averaging a 61% reduction in symptom severity as measured by the PCL–M (PTSD Check List—Military) and demonstrated by measurable EEG/EKG changes.

We applaud your continued interest in exploring effective, science-based and proven medical technologies to help our Veterans. Like you, we believe it is our obligation and duty to ensure Veterans receive the treatment they need to have their lives and livelihoods restored.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. BERGER, PH.D.,
Executive Director.

ASSOCIATION OF THE
UNITED STATES NAVY,
Alexandria, VA, March 21, 2017.

Hon. STEPHEN KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

On behalf of the Association of the United States Navy, we would like to pledge our support for H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act. This bill directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG guided resonance therapy to veterans.

Magnetic EEG/EKG guided resonance therapy has successfully treated more than 400 veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction. Recent clinical trials and randomized, placebo-controlled, double blind studies have produced promising measurable outcomes in the evolution of this type of therapy.

The pilot program, as laid out in the bill, will allow the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG guided resonance therapy to treat suffering veterans. The program will be located at no more than two facilities and test no more than fifty veterans. The program will be carried out for one year, and no more than 90 days after the termination of the program, the Secretary will submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House a report on the pilot program.

Thank you for taking an active role in such an important issue to the Military and Veteran community by working to improve the lives and careers of those who served our great nation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concern.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL J. LITTLE,
Director of Legislative Affairs.

VETERANS ADVANTAGE,
Greenwich, CT, February 17, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: On behalf of Veterans Advantage, PBC, the leading private-sector benefit company that advocates for greater respect, recognition and rewards for U.S. military, veterans and their family members, I am writing in support of the No Hero Left Untreated Act, HR1162.

I am a Vietnam Veteran who has first-hand experience with the effects of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Post Traumatic Stress (PTS). My son, who has sustained multiple concussions and suffers from PTS, has undergone treatment at the Brain Treatment Center (BTC) over the last year and continues to do so. As a result of this treatment, we have seen significant progress in addressing the symptoms associated with his condition, in particular his depression and anxiety have lessened. No other therapies have any effect on his condition. He has made steady progress and is now on the road to restoring his health.

The current state of treatment for TBI, mild Traumatic Brain Injury (mTBI), and PTS, is woefully inadequate. While hundreds of thousands of servicemembers suffer from these conditions when they return from war zones and multiple tours while serving our nation, there is a systemic failure to address the emotional and physical effects of combat. This is a national crisis and one we must address immediately.

The legislation you are advocating is a significant step to provide the treatment our servicemen and women so desperately need and deserve. I have reviewed the double blind studies with Dr. Jin and the staff of the BTC. The use of Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided Resonance Therapy (MeRT, a non-invasive treatment) under the direction of the BTC has achieved unprecedented success rates in in both open-label trials and randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind studies. To date, over 98% of veteran PTSD/TBI patients have responded positively to this treatment option—averaging a 61% reduction in symptom severity as measured by the PTSD Check List—Military (PCL–M) and demonstrated by measurable EEG/EKG changes.

Thank you for your initiative in sponsoring this important legislation and your support of America's heroes through the No Hero Left Behind Act.

Respectfully yours,

H. SCOTT HIGGINS,
Vietnam War Veteran,
CEO/Veterans Advantage, PBC.

THE PATRIOT PROJECT,
March 2, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: On behalf of the Patriot Project, a grassroots movement to provide Military Service Members, Families, Gold Star Dependents and Wounded Warriors with vital Chiropractic care to which they have little access, despite its inclusion in Veteran benefits; I am writing in support of H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act. This important piece of legislation offers America's Veterans a timely non-drug health solution for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), chronic pain, and opiate drug addiction through Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided Resonance Therapy technology (MeRT technology).

Consisting of over 5000 Chiropractors, nationwide, the Patriot Project has witnessed the invisible and visible life-altering injuries of war these Veterans suffer, with little access to solutions except for drugs, and surgeries. The Patriot Project Board, made up of more than half a dozen Congressional Medal of Honor Recipients, has taken on the challenge of restoring hope to our returning warriors by pursuing non-drug interventions with vigor.

As tens of thousands of Veterans return home each year, they encounter a systemic failure to adequately address the emotional and physical effects of combat. Current treatments for PTSD, TBI and even mild Traumatic Brain Injuries (mTBI) have limited utility to sufficiently heal our Veterans. The urgency of understanding and responding to this national crisis becomes even more compelling when one sees the growing scope, impact and prevalence of PTSD particularly in Veteran suicide rates. The doctors at the Newport Brain Research Lab/Brain Treatment Center (NBRL/BTC), believe it is their obligation and duty to ensure Veterans receive the treatment they need to have their lives and livelihoods restored.

H.R. 1162 is a significant step forward in providing Veterans with the treatment they

desperately need and clearly deserve. MeRT technology brings a novel neuromodulation approach, achieving unprecedented success rates in both open-label trials and randomized, placebo-controlled, double-blind studies with over 98% of Veteran PTSD/TBI patients responding positively to this treatment option. Without investment in such innovative treatment, our nation's Veterans will continue to pay a disproportionate toll for their service.

We applaud Congressman Knight and his attentive staff for their commitment to explore effective, science-based, and proven medical technologies and their unwavering support to helping America's heroes.

Sincerely,

DR. CAROL ANN MALIZIA,
CAM Integrative Consulting, Patriot Project Board Member.

LINES FOR LIFE,
March 9, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: Thank you for your ongoing efforts to support our veterans, particularly through HR 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act. Lines for Life supports this important piece of legislation that will expand promising neurological treatment for veterans coping with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury (TBI), military sexual trauma, chronic pain, and opiate addiction.

Lines for Life operates a regional Military Helpline that offers free, anonymous help to active-duty service members, veterans, and their families. We also serve as the sole backup center for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Veterans Crisis Line. In 2016, we received over 31,500 military-related calls from individuals who are struggling to cope with mental health issues including anger, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress, and thoughts of suicide.

Veterans comprise 9% of the United States population, but account for 18% of suicides. Our nation's inadequate attention to the emotional and physical effects of combat, particularly TBI and PTSD, have left our veteran community paying a disproportionate toll for their service. Treatment methods to date have had limited utility. We must respond to the growing scope, impact, and prevalence of PTSD by enhancing our understanding and response to this critical issue.

We applaud your continued interest in exploring effective, science-based, and proven medical technologies to help our veterans. We believe it is our obligation and duty to ensure veterans receive the treatment they need to have their lives and livelihoods restored.

Sincerely,

DWIGHT HOLTON,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR WOMEN LEGISLATORS,
March 6, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: We are writing in support of HR 1162 the No Hero Left Untreated Act, for which your efforts should be highly commended on behalf of Veterans. This important piece of legislation will bring America's Veterans a significant contribution to their health solutions for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), chronic pain and opiate drug addiction through MeRT (Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided Resonance Therapy).

As of early 2015, the effects of our nation's collective failure to adequately address the emotional and physical effects of combat, particularly Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBI), mild Traumatic Brain Injuries (mTBI), and PTSD have left our Veteran community paying a disproportionate toll for their service to the Nation. Treatment modalities to date, clearly, have had limited utility. The urgency of understanding and responding to this national issue becomes more obvious when one sees the growing scope, impact, and prevalence of PTSD, evident both in Veteran suicides and related societal indicators. While some may view this as a societal cost that cannot be averted, that is not our view.

We applaud your continued interest in exploring effective, science-based and proven medical technologies to help our Veterans. Like you, we believe it is our obligation and duty to ensure Veterans receive the treatment they need to have their lives and livelihoods restored.

Sincerely,

MINNESOTA STATE SENATOR CARRIE RUUD,
2017 NFWL Chair, On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Foundation for Women Legislators.

PSYCHARMOR INSTITUTE,
March 8, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: I am writing in support of HR 1162 the No Hero Left Untreated Act, for which your efforts should be highly commended on behalf of Veterans. This important piece of legislation will allow for a neurological treatment option for Veterans who suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), chronic pain and opiate drug addiction.

This non-pharmaceutical and non-invasive treatment has helped hundreds of Veterans and their families who are supporting and caring for these Veterans. There is no one treatment for every individual, and it is important to give Veterans options so that they have the power to choose which treatment is best for them and their situation. Veterans have sacrificed so much for our nation; it is our obligation to provide for them and their families.

We applaud your continued interest in exploring effective, science-based and proven medical technologies to help our Veterans. Like you, we believe it is our obligation and duty to ensure Veterans receive the treatment they need to have their lives and livelihoods restored.

Sincerely,

MARJORIE MORRISON,
PsychArmor Institute, CEO & Founder.

FEBRUARY 17, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: Recent elections have focused us, once again, on the ''here and now.'' And rightly so. With the elections behind us, we have a shared sense of relief. But for combat veterans, the ''here and now'' is also often defined by ''there and then.'' They carry courage into battle, serve with honor and come home—often finding they need new courage to confront a new foe. Veterans who confront post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and related symptoms also deserve relief—and this Veterans' Day, Congress is poised to give it to them.

Truth can be compelling when it meets you up close and personal. You know that for many Veterans, there is new truth afoot, and it is compelling—and hopeful. In recent years, the specialized, little-publicized brain treatment program for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) known as Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided Resonance Therapy (MeRT technology) has emerged. The unique treatment, much studied and now widely corroborated, is powerful. It changes lives.

Just as the election was an inflection point, you have recognized that Congress is in a position to change lives in America for the better. If Congress can move beyond words and intentions, beyond political jousting, America's veterans will be forever grateful—and lives will be saved by the thousands, and you are doing just that.

The chance to give life back to those on the edge, who wrestle daily with PTSD and related life-stresses and opiate addiction, is at our finger-tips. The Washington Post and veteran publications have aptly described it, and time is now for action. I cannot say this with more conviction: We must act to save the precious lives, and every one at risk is precious. We lose more than 20 young men and women daily to PTSD, and we can stop this in a single congressional vote for your bill.

The No Hero Left Untreated Act H.R. 1162 can help to change everything. Through pilot programs administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), veterans will turn a critical corner. It will help to restore their mental health, saving countless lives and those touched by those lives. Without this act, our veterans will continue to languish without access to this help. Seeing you, in a first post-election act bringing fifty Members together to unify around what matters, can only be applauded. Politics aside, Congress acting now to pass H.R. 1162 and a Senate companion bill following immediately will begin immediately saving the veterans most at risk. As your action clearly demonstrates, there can no longer be any excuse.

As first reported by the Washington Post, this is an inflection point—a show stopper, a real chance for meaningful change. Tested through double-blind studies, 98 percent of MeRT-treated veterans experienced at least a 10-point improvement in their PTSD Check List–Military (PCL–M) score, and saw significant reduction in symptom severity, after only 4 weeks of treatment. These results have been mirrored in additional open label trials as well. Nothing else I know of has come close to this success rate.

Congressman Knight, all this brings me to today and my offering of my support for your efforts on behalf of my brothers and sisters who have so ably served. I thank you for making their futures your first priority in the 115th Congress.

Sincerely,

REBECCA HALSTEAD,
Brigadier General Retired, (USA retired).

WESTCARE FOUNDATION,
February 22, 2017.

Hon. STEVE KNIGHT,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN KNIGHT: The purpose of this letter is to show full support from WestCare Foundation, Inc, for H.R. 1162, the No Hero Left Untreated Act. This progressive piece of legislation brings a critical health solution for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), Military Sexual Trauma (MST), chronic pain, and opiate drug addiction to our nation's Veterans through Magnetic EEG/EKG-guided Resonance Therapy (MeRT technology).

The doctors of the Newport Brain Research Lab/Brain Treatment Center (NBRL/BTC) have introduced a game-changer addressing

seemingly intractable behavioral health conditions through their development of MeRT technology. The data from both open label and double-blind studies of MeRT technology are compelling. This protocol, offered as a first line treatment of the physical brain through neuromodulation, can improve the behavioral health outcomes for all of us who subsequently provide evidence-based therapies that will further benefit Veteran patients and clients as, together, we create a more effective comprehensive continuum of care.

As a Veteran of the Vietnam War, myself, I am especially interested in seeing the VA bring this work into their practice of medicine. For over forty years later, we continue to see the negative life impact of war on our men and women who served without the advent of practice and protocols sufficient for their full recovery. MeRT technology is producing results that are saving lives and increasing the potential for follow-on therapies to change the future trajectory of the lives of our Veterans and their families as well.

We owe our warriors the very best treatment available in America. MeRT technology is clearly making a difference. I commend you for offering this important legislation and urge its passage as soon as possible! Every day without it can be measured in loss of life, in loss of positive contribution to our communities from our American heroes, and in loss of our fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, friends and neighbors.

Sincerely,

RICHARD STEINBERG,
President/CEO.

Mr. KNIGHT. Mr. Speaker, in a time when the Defense Department maintains technological superiority over our adversaries in combat, our Veterans Affairs Department must continue to push the technological limit to treating our selfless servicemembers once their duty is done.

I am optimistic that this pilot program for our veteran population will be the first of many that improves our ability to heal wounded veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I will leave my colleagues with one last quote. As the AMVETS' executive director stated in his letter of support for this bill: ''It is imperative that we, as a nation, look at new ways to help those who have stood up and walked the walk, and suffer the consequences day after day.''

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes.''

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California (Mr. KNIGHT) for his innovative approach in trying to get services to our veterans.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 1162.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I, too, encourage all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1162.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VA PRESCRIPTION DATA ACCOUNTABILITY ACT 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1545) to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1545

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''VA Prescription Data Accountability Act 2017''.

SEC. 2. SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISCLOSURE OF PATIENT INFORMATION TO STATE CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE MONITORING PROGRAMS.

Section 5701(l) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(1)'' before ''Under'';

(2) by striking ''a veteran or the dependent of a veteran'' and inserting ''a covered individual''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(2) In this subsection, a 'covered individual' is an individual who is dispensed medication prescribed by an employee of the Department or by a non-Department provider authorized to prescribe such medication by the Department.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1545, the VA Prescription Data Accountability Act of 2017. H.R. 1545 would require the Department of Veterans Affairs to disclose information about any individual prescribed medication by a VA employee or a provider authorized by the VA to a State Prescription Drug Monitoring Program to the extent necessary to prevent misuse and diversion of prescription medication.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs are Statewide electronic databases that collect and distribute information on prescription medication to certain authorized individuals or entities. They are used to identify and address prescription drug abuse, addiction, and diversion.

While 90 percent of the VA's patient population are veterans, the VA treats certain nonveterans, including Active-Duty servicemembers who receive VA care through sharing agreements with the Department of Defense, dependents, caregivers of veterans, and VA staff, to name a few.

Current law authorizes the VA to disclose information to Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs for veterans and dependents of veterans only. The VA is not authorized to disclose information for other patients.

Moreover, technological barriers prevent the VA from transmitting dependent data to Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs. That means that prescription drug information for nonveterans—10 percent of the VA's patient population, which translates to more than 700,000 veterans this fiscal year—is not being shared with Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs today.

In light of ongoing concerns about the potential for misuse or diversion of prescription medication, particularly opioid medications, it is imperative that the VA share information about all VA patients, veteran and nonveteran, to State Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs. It is a matter of public safety.

H.R. 1545 is supported by the American Legion, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and by the VA, who testified before the Subcommittee on Health earlier this year that this authority would ''ensure that VA is able to fulfill its public health role in sharing vital clinical information to help guide treatment decisions.''

Mr. Speaker, this bill is sponsored by the gentlewoman of New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER), the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, who is joined by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Health; the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY), the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Health. I am grateful to all of them for sponsoring this legislation. It has my full support, and I urge all of our colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1545 offered by the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER), who is the ranking member of our Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, and, as importantly, a champion of policies that make sure the scourge of opioid addiction is addressed in this Congress, and is a leading expert on it.

This legislation would make significant progress towards curbing substance abuse disorders and diversion of prescription medication in our veteran population.

As you heard, currently, a veteran's dependent can receive a prescription for a controlled substance from a provider in the community, and then they receive the same prescription for the same controlled substance from a VA provider without either provider's knowledge of what happened.

Congress, in the past, has attempted to remedy this problem but, due to confusion within the VA, was unsuccessful. I believe that Congresswoman KUSTER's legislation would clear up this confusion and allow the VA to better serve both veterans and their dependents by allowing the VA and community providers to recognize and treat substance abuse disorders instead of contributing to them by unintentionally overprescribing.

Mr. Speaker, I fully support this legislation. I would encourage all of my colleagues to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, at this time I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO).

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the VA Prescription Data Accountability Act. We face a serious opioid epidemic in our communities across the Nation. As we work to put forth solutions to this crisis, it is critical that we incorporate the Veterans Health Administration into existing, effective controlled substance monitoring programs.

To ensure effective, accurate oversight of who is being prescribed controlled substances, this legislation would require the VA to disclose information about all individuals, veteran or dependent, who receive such prescriptions from the VHA.

In my home State of Pennsylvania, we have an established comprehensive and effective Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. Incorporating additional data from the VA is an appropriate step to utilize proven existing networks to fight back against the opioid epidemic.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER), my good friend and the ranking member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, and a critical partner in serving our veterans.

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) and the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) for their support of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise to speak on my bill, H.R. 1545, the VA Prescription Accountability Act. This bill demonstrates the power of bipartisanship in this Congress, especially on the House VA Committee.

I thank the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP) for his willingness to co-lead this bill with me, and also the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BERGMAN) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BROWNLEY) for cosponsoring this commonsense legislation.

This bill is common sense because it improves upon the Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs, also known as PDMPs across this country. PDMPs are proven resources in combating our Nation's opioid epidemic. PDMPs improve the public health and our general well-being.

In 2012, the VA was finally authorized to connect its patient population to State PDMPs. But, unfortunately, an issue with the VA's antiquated computer systems meant that literally hundreds of thousands of nonveteran patients at the VA were left excluded from the data reported to PDMPs by the VA.

As the ranking member of the House Veterans' Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, I am all too familiar with the continued issues with computer systems across the entirety of the VA. This issue underscores the need for the VA and this Congress to ensure effective and rapid reform to the VA's computer systems. When those systemic shortcomings potentially exacerbate the Nation's opioid epidemic, I saw the importance to take action.

Through my Bipartisan Heroin Task Force, we in Congress have learned the importance of ensuring prescription opioids are not misused. The consequences are truly dire. Over 30,000 Americans die in opioid-related overdoses every year. That number just continues to rise.

This bill represents a small but practical step forward in addressing this crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to vote in favor of this low-cost bill. It will help ensure these important programs work as intended by closing the gap in prescription information. I urge my Senate colleagues to quickly take up the bill and pass it in the Senate as well.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO), our vice ranking member of the full Committee on Veterans' Affairs and a true champion of veterans.

□ 1545

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of my colleague from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER) and her bill to improve information sharing between providers to ensure that they are able to follow safe prescribing practices.

The VA Prescription Data Accountability Act helps to close a loophole in statute that limits the data that the VA can share with Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs, or PDMPs. These databases track the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances to help find suspected fraud and intervene with patients who are at high risk for prescription drug abuse. These databases are only as useful as the information they collect.

Since 2011, the VA has been able to share prescription data with PDMPs, but only for the veteran patients it sees. Statutory and technical challenges have prevented the Department from sharing data from nonveteran patients with PDMPs. Approximately 10 percent of the VA's patients are nonveterans. We are talking about 700,000 patients each year.

Now, Ms. KUSTER's bill expands the authority of the VA to share all patient data with PDMPs. This will allow us to better monitor the use of prescription drugs and help combat a growing opioid epidemic.

On average, 650,000 opioid prescriptions are dispensed daily in the United States, and 78 people die from opioid-related overdoses. Properly tracking prescription drugs is one of the first steps to turn the tide on this epidemic.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join us in passing H.R. 1545.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

In over 31 years of the practice of medicine, I have seen great changes, many of them to the good. One of the things that has disturbed me greatly is the opioid epidemic that we have in this great country at this time. I am an obstetrician. I have delivered a lot of babies in my career, and it was a rare event when we saw a baby that was addicted to opioids—as a matter of fact, almost never until, literally, about 20 years ago, and 10 years ago a full-fledged epidemic.

In our hospital at home, we have a neonatal intensive care unit that cares for nothing but opioid-addicted babies. In our State of Tennessee, Mr. Speaker, we have had more people who died of prescription drug overdose deaths than died in car wrecks. It now exceeds many cancer deaths in the country.

This bill has my 100 percent support, and I certainly want to thank Ms. KUSTER for her great work on this bill. We have shared a trip to Afghanistan together, as we did with Mr. TAKANO, and had a chance to talk about these things in great detail. I want to thank her and also the ranking member for their support in this.

I once again encourage all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1545.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

IMPROVING THE TREATMENT OF MEDICAL EVIDENCE PROVIDED BY NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1725) to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the treatment of medical evidence provided by non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical professionals in support of claims for disability compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1725

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. REPORT ON PROGRESS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS ACCEPTABLE CLINICAL EVIDENCE INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the progress of the Acceptable Clinical Evidence initiative of the Department of Veterans Affairs in reducing the necessity for in-person disability examinations and other efforts to comply with the provisions of section 5125 of title 38, United States Code.

(b) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) The number of claims eligible for the Acceptable Clinical Evidence initiative during the period beginning on the date of the commencement of the initiative and ending on the date of the submittal of the report, disaggregated by fiscal year.

(2) The total number of claims eligible for the Acceptable Clinical Evidence initiative that required a medical examiner of the Department to supplement the evidence with information obtained during a telephone interview with a claimant.

(3) Information on any other initiatives or efforts of the Department to further encourage the use of private medical evidence and reliance upon reports of a medical examination administered by a private physician if the report is sufficiently complete to be adequate for the purposes of adjudicating a claim.

(4) The anticipated impact on the timeline and accuracy of a decision on a claim for benefits under chapter 11 or 15 of title 38, United States Code, if the Secretary were prohibited from requesting a medical examination in the case of a claim in support of which a claimant submits medical evidence and a medical opinion provided by a private physician that is competent, credible, probative, and otherwise adequate for the purpose of making a decision on that claim.

(5) Recommendations on how the Department can measure, track, and prevent the ordering of unnecessary medical examinations when the provision by a claimant of a medical examination administered by a private physician in support of a claim for benefits under chapter 11 or 15 of title 38, United States Code, is adequate for the purpose of making a decision on that claim.

SEC. 2. ANNUAL REPORT ON SUBMITTAL OF PRIVATE MEDICAL EVIDENCE IN SUPPORT OF CLAIMS FOR DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS.

Not later than March 1 of fiscal years 2018 through 2024, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to Congress a report that includes, for the calendar year preceding the year in which the report is submitted, the following for each regional office of the Department of Veterans Affairs:

(1) The number of times a veteran who submitted private medical evidence in support of a claim for compensation or pension under the laws administered by the Secretary was scheduled for an examination performed by Department personnel because the private medical evidence submitted was determined to be unacceptable.

(2) The most common reasons why private medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary was determined to be unacceptable.

(3) The types of disabilities for which claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary were mostly commonly denied when private medical evidence was submitted.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 1725, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1725, as amended, was introduced by my good friend Mr. WALZ, the ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

This bill addresses a very serious issue. When a veteran files a claim for disability benefits, VA may need a medical opinion regarding whether the injury or illness is service connected and, if it is, the extent of the veteran's disability. The problem is that the VA often schedules a medical disability examination when one might not be needed.

Many times, a veteran will submit medical evidence from a private doctor with enough information for VA to decide the claim, but we hear about cases where VA still requires a VA examination. Ordering unnecessary disability examinations is a waste of time and resources. It takes doctors away from taking care of their patients and conducting other disability examinations.

H.R. 1725, as amended, would require VA to provide reports to Congress about its use of private medical evidence. This information will be used to help us find ways to make the disability examination more efficient for veterans.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1725, as amended.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this piece of legislation.

I want to thank the chairman personally for bringing this forward and for being very eloquent in his words on what this does. It is appropriate that it is part of this block of legislation dealing with appeals reform also.

I thank the folks who have worked on this for years: Mr. DENHAM, Mr. LANGEVIN, Ms. MCSALLY, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. COSTELLO, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. HIGGINS of New York, and Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

As originally introduced, this bill sought to change a current requirement stipulating that initial physical examinations of those seeking to file disability claims must be conducted by the VA. It was to allow veterans to see a local doctor.

Again, as the chairman so clearly pointed out, it was to relieve some of the pressure on the VA, while recognizing we have quality, ethically trustworthy physicians in the private sector who can deliver some of these services. The idea was that requiring the VA to accept private medical evidence from a qualified physician would ease the benefit process in rural communities, expedite diagnosis of disabilities, and reduce the wait times and the backlogs.

This is a problem that we have been working on for many years. We introduced similar language in 2013, 2014, and 2015.

I would like to thank all my fellow members, both on and off the committee, and those who are no longer in Congress for working toward this. I am especially thankful to Chairman BOST and Ms. ESTY for having worked with me to tighten the scope of this bill to address the cost that the Congressional Budget Office scored it to.

As it is now, the bill requires an annual report on how veterans obtain private medical evidence in support of their claim, how often it is rejected, and why. It is my hope that this data will help build our case for mandating that the VA accept all credible private medical evidence. We cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good and need to get started gathering this data as soon as possible.

As we also work to improve the appeals process today, making it more convenient for veterans to get and submit medical evidence, this component will be important. By continuing our work on this issue, veterans will be able to complete their claims faster; start receiving the benefits that they have earned faster; and make sure that the stress you heard about with 20 years of waiting, much of that time

seeing private physicians and gathering evidence to support the very claim that is being denied, this piece of legislation should make sense with that.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone involved with this. I urge my colleagues to support this piece of legislation, H.R. 1725.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I wholeheartedly endorse this bill.

Mr. WALZ, Sergeant Major Walz, speaks with great passion about it. He has the Mayo Clinic in his district. I can't imagine an evaluation at the Mayo Clinic by physicians there wouldn't be adequate for the VA.

I wholeheartedly support this bill, H.R. 1725, as amended. I urge all Members to also support it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1725, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit certain reports relating to medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

VETERANS' COMPENSATION COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT ACT OF 2017

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1329) to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, to improve the processing of claims by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1329

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. INCREASE IN RATES OF DISABILITY COMPENSATION AND DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION.

(a) RATE ADJUSTMENT.—Effective on December 1, 2017, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall increase, in accordance with subsection (c), the dollar amounts in effect on November 30, 2017, for the payment of disability compensation and dependency and indemnity compensation under the provisions specified in subsection (b).

(b) AMOUNTS TO BE INCREASED.—The dollar amounts to be increased pursuant to subsection (a) are the following:

(1) WARTIME DISABILITY COMPENSATION.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1114 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) ADDITIONAL COMPENSATION FOR DEPENDENTS.—Each of the dollar amounts under section 1115(1) of such title.

(3) CLOTHING ALLOWANCE.—The dollar amount under section 1162 of such title.

(4) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO SURVIVING SPOUSE.—Each of the dollar amounts under subsections (a) through (d) of section 1311 of such title.

(5) DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION TO CHILDREN.—Each of the dollar amounts under sections 1313(a) and 1314 of such title.

(c) DETERMINATION OF INCREASE.—Each dollar amount described in subsection (b) shall be increased by the same percentage as the percentage by which benefit amounts payable under title II of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 401 et seq.) are increased effective December 1, 2017, as a result of a determination under section 215(i) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)).

(d) SPECIAL RULE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may adjust administratively, consistent with the increases made under subsection (a), the rates of disability compensation payable to persons under section 10 of Public Law 85–857 (72 Stat. 1263) who have not received compensation under chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. PUBLICATION OF ADJUSTED RATES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register the amounts specified in section 2(b), as increased under that section, not later than the date on which the matters specified in section 215(i)(2)(D) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 415(i)(2)(D)) are required to be published by reason of a determination made under section 215(i) of such Act during fiscal year 2018.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) and the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. WALZ) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all Members have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to insert extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 1329, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1329, as amended, is one of the most important bills the House will take up this year. This bill will help ensure that the benefits paid to veterans who are disabled as a result of their military service do not lose value because of inflation. H.R. 1329, as amended, authorizes a cost-of-living increase for veterans and their families next year as long as Social Security recipients receive an increase.

We pass this bill every year, and it has always enjoyed wide, bipartisan support. This year's bill was introduced by the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs Chairman BOST and Ranking Member ESTY.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1329, as amended, and help disabled veterans and their families keep up with the rate of inflation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise to support H.R. 1329, as amended. The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act provides a 1-year cost-of-living adjustment for the rate of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities as well as the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for survivors.

As most of us know, this adjustment is tied directly to the rates of increase in Social Security benefits. Disability payments are vital to the economic well-being of most veterans, and that support should never be eroded by inflation. This bill ensures that does not happen.

I thank Chairman ROE for bringing the bill to us in a totally bipartisan process, and the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, as always.

The names of Chairman BOST and Ranking Member ESTY have been brought up a lot today. It says something about it. They are tackling issues that have lasted years. They are bringing up important issues that are going to impact the well-being of veterans. You heard them both say it. They did so in a bipartisan manner that I think serves the reputation of this House well. We sorely need more true bipartisan problem solving like this.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. BOST), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Chairman BOST.

Mr. BOST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1329, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017. This bill should be a top priority for all of us this year. H.R. 1329 should ensure that the veterans receive a cost-of-living increase next year if Social Security recipients get one.

We all know that the price keeps going up and that if veterans' benefits don't keep pace, veterans and their families may have a hard time paying for basic necessities like food, shelter, and clothing. This bill is extremely important to our Nation's veterans. I ask all Members to support it.

I want to thank the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs, Ms. ESTY, for her support of this legislation. I urge my colleagues, all, also to support H.R. 1329.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker. I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from

Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the vice chairman of our committee.

□ 1600

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, this truly is a bipartisan committee under the able leadership of Chairman ROE and Ranking Member WALZ.

Again, I am proud to serve on this committee.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 1329, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act. Passage of this bill gives our Nation's veterans the same cost-of-living adjustment as those receiving benefits through Social Security.

These brave men and women have sacrificed so much for the freedoms and liberties we enjoy on a daily basis. As a grateful nation, we must ensure that those who put themselves in harm's way are able to receive the benefits they have earned and deserve. Providing for our Nation's true American heroes is not a partisan issue, but simply the right thing to do.

Mr. Speaker, approximately 1.6 million veterans reside in the great State of Florida, where so many veterans call home after serving in the military. As vice chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am so very proud that Florida is considered one of the most veteran friendly States across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, Representative MIKE BOST from Indiana, for introducing this very important piece of legislation.

As a cosponsor of H.R. 1329, I urge all of my colleagues to support our Nation's heroes and pass the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Maine (Mr. POLIQUIN), my good friend and a member of our committee.

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman very much for this opportunity to speak on behalf of H.R. 1329, and I salute Congressman BOST from Illinois and Congresswoman ESTY from the great State of Connecticut for their great work in a bipartisan fashion to help our heroes.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it was our first Commander in Chief, George Washington, who said, in effect, that we can never expect our young men and women to step forward and serve our country in uniform unless and until we make sure we take care of those who have already returned from the battlefield.

Now, in the State of Maine, Mr. Speaker, we love our veterans. We have about 125,000 of our heroes in our State of Maine, more than half of whom are in the rural part of our State, the Second Congressional District of Maine, that I am honored to represent.

I think it is a great idea and about time that we make sure that we come before the American people, Republicans and Democrats together, to make sure that our veterans receive a cost-of-living adjustment—those who have been disabled—as a result of their service for our country.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all Republicans and Democrats on this committee and in this body to please support H.R. 1329. It is the right thing to do, to give a cost-of-living increase to our veterans.

Mr. WALZ. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1329. But as we get ready to close on the final piece of seven pieces of legislation, some that have taken years, that have included diverse groups coming together to try to find solutions, you are seeing today all seven of these bills are going to pass this House. They are going to pass with overwhelmingly, if not unanimous, bipartisan support.

I have stood on this floor and have expressed my displeasure and my discomfort when we don't work together. Today it is one of those pleasures to stand here and say this is what the American people expect, and this is the hard work that needs to be done. That kind of thing does not happen by chance. It usually takes one person standing at the middle of that in leadership to make it happen.

I would like to thank my friend and colleague, our chairman of the committee, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE), for ensuring that veterans come before politics, veterans come before partisan differences, and that veterans legislation can be done together in a bipartisan manner. So, I thank him for that and encourage support of all of these pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank my good friend, Sergeant Major WALZ for his kind words.

Certainly, what we try to do on the Veterans' Affairs Committee is leave Republican and Democrat at the door of the committee room and go and do the work of the veterans for what is best for them. It is a true pleasure and honor, if you have ever attended one of our meetings, to see that and to see the effort of all Members. And you can see here today, with seven important pieces of legislation passed, it will help improve the lives of our veterans.

I know, for me, that this time of the year—and I feel sure that my friends on the other side of the aisle feel the same way—is one of the most difficult times of the year. It is Memorial Day. And I don't think we need to forget, this coming Monday, what that means. It is for all of those who didn't make it home who protected this great country.

I know, myself, I get some guilt this time of year. I was a drafted soldier, as many of us were. I served my time in 1973 and 1974 in Korea, just south of the DMZ. Many of my friends didn't make it home from Vietnam. I still feel for them and their families.

I know every Memorial Day, when I attend a service for veterans, it is difficult for me to get through that day because I got to come home, as all of us here who are serving did. We got to raise our children and see our grandchildren be born. These men and women who died in Vietnam and other wars didn't get to do that, as young people are doing today. So I can't thank, enough, the veterans of this great Nation who serve us every day and keep us free.

Mr. Speaker, I encourage all Members to support H.R. 1329, as amended, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1329, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS AGAINST TECHNOLOGICAL EXPLOITATION ACT

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2052) to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2052

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Protecting the Rights of IndiViduals Against Technological Exploitation Act'' or the ''PRIVATE Act''.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON WRONGFUL BROADCAST OR DISTRIBUTION OF INTIMATE VISUAL IMAGES.

(a) PROHIBITION.—Subchapter X of chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting after section 917 (article 117 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice) the following new section (article):

''§ 917a. Art. 117a. Wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images

''(a) PROHIBITION.—Any person subject to this chapter who—

''(1) knowingly and wrongfully broadcasts or distributes an intimate visual image of a private area of another person who—

''(A) is at least 18 years of age at the time the intimate visual image was created;

''(B) is identifiable from the image itself or from information displayed in connection with the image; and

''(C) does not explicitly consent to the broadcast or distribution of the intimate visual image;

''(2) knows or reasonably should have known that the intimate visual image was made under circumstances in which the person depicted in the intimate visual image retained a reasonable expectation of privacy regarding any broadcast or distribution of the intimate visual image; and

''(3) knows or reasonably should have known that the broadcast or distribution of the intimate visual image is likely—

''(A) to cause harm, harassment, intimidation, emotional distress, or financial loss for the person depicted in the intimate visual image; or

''(B) to harm substantially the depicted person with respect to that person's health, safety, business, calling, career, financial condition, reputation, or personal relationships,

is guilty of wrongful distribution of intimate visual images and shall by punished as a court-martial may direct.

''(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section (article):

''(1) BROADCAST.—The term 'broadcast' means to electronically transmit a visual image with the intent that it be viewed by a person or persons.

''(2) DISTRIBUTE.—The term 'distribute' means to deliver to the actual or constructive possession of another person, including transmission by mail or electronic means.

''(3) INTIMATE VISUAL IMAGE.—The term 'intimate visual image' means a photograph, video, film, or recording made by any means that depicts a private area of a person.

''(4) PRIVATE AREA.—The term 'private area' means the naked or underwear-clad genitalia, anus, buttocks, or female areola or nipple.

''(5) REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF PRIVACY.—The term 'reasonable expectation of privacy' refers to circumstances in which a reasonable person would believe that an intimate visual image of a private area of the person would not be broadcast or distributed to another person.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of subchapter X of chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code (the Uniform Code of Military Justice), is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 917 (article 117) the following new item:

''917a. 117a. Wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Arizona.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Arizona?

There was no objection.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2052, the Protecting the Rights of Individuals Against Technological Exploitation Act, or the PRIVATE Act. This act would amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual imagines.

Recent revelations that nude photographs of servicemembers were nonconsensually posted to social media websites like Marines United is abhorrent. This repugnant behavior is unacceptable, and we must work to prevent this deplorable behavior from occurring again.

The Neanderthals who committed these acts are not emblematic of the vast majority of decent and honorable servicemembers who serve our Nation. However, the notion that any servicemember would think it is acceptable to upload, view, or comment on nude photos of their fellow servicemembers is a serious problem that must be fixed.

This bill will help hold perpetrators of these types of crimes accountable. It will strengthen the Uniform Code of Military Justice by establishing an enumerated, punitive article that clearly prohibits the wrongful, nonconsensual sharing of intimate visual images, even when those images were initially given with consent.

While the Uniform Code of Military Justice currently contains two general articles under which these crimes can already be prosecuted, this new provision will give commanders an additional specific tool and send a clear message to servicemembers that this behavior is unacceptable and is, in fact, a crime.

The PRIVATE Act is designed to protect our servicemen and -women and is supported by 26 different military and veterans organizations.

While there are many divisive issues facing Congress today, as a retired colonel and 26-year combat veteran of the Air Force, I am heartened that this bill enjoys such significant bipartisan support.

I wish to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, including Ms. SPEIER for her leadership, for her cosponsorship, and for her devotion to our servicemembers.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Four years ago, I stood on the House floor and condemned the online bullying of U.S. Marine Corps servicewomen on Facebook. These web pages contained obscene and abusive pictures, and implied that women only advanced professionally by performing sexual favors.

I sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense and the Commandant of the Marine Corps asking them to take action. I got a letter back from the Commandant which said, ''I share your indignation.'' I didn't want him to share my indignation. I wanted him to do something about it. Neither he nor the Department of Defense inspector general did anything.

Lack of consequences caused this cultural rot to spread further. The Marines United page, through which hundreds of Active-Duty and veteran marines viewed thousands of nonconsensually distributed intimate imagines, damaged the lives and the careers of more servicemembers than I can imagine. In fact, many of these servicemembers were identified by name and the bases at which they served.

Despite reports of this vile site, new versions continue to crop up and spread more destruction, unchecked by military leadership. Until now, the leadership failures that allowed this to go on for 4 years also extended to Congress. We did nothing except hold a subcommittee hearing on—wait, let me indicate what it was on—social media policy, without a single survivor brought to testify.

This is not about social media policy. This is about abhorrent behavior by servicemembers against other servicemembers.

Two months ago, a bipartisan group of Members held a hearing on this very issue, and we had victims who testified. One of those members, who was Active Duty, said that her Marine Corps drill instructor said to her and the other women during their training, ''The only women that serve in the marines are sluts, lesbians . . . '' or a word that starts with a B that I won't mention on the House floor.

How destructive can that be?

Today, that ends. My colleagues on both sides of the aisle are taking a stand. Today, I am honored and proud to support H.R. 2052 with my colleague, Ms. MCSALLY.

This bill will ensure that nonconsensual pornography is made illegal by explicitly forbidding the sharing of intimate images without the consent of the subject.

Right now, the reprehensible acts of nonconsensually distributed and consensually obtained photographs is not clearly defined as illegal under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. That is why this bill is a critical step in ensuring that our female servicemembers aren't distracted from protecting the country by having to also protect themselves against online abusers and colleagues within the services.

But let me be clear. Our work is not done. If the chain of command continues to see nonconsensual pornography as a ''boys will be boys'' joke instead of sexual violence, nothing will change. Such conduct must result in severe and immediate consequences for the perpetrators. The PRIVATE Act must pass, and it must be enforced.

I also want to note that the passage of the PRIVATE Act does not apply to the civilian people in our country. Although 34 States have passed laws to address nonconsensual pornography, their approaches vary widely, and some are very flawed. That is why a Federal law is needed to provide a single, clear articulation of the elements of this crime to ensure that Americans in every part of the country—civilian and military—are protected if they are subjected to this heinous abuse.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2052. We have come a long way in 4 years since I found those vile Facebook pages. Four years from now, I hope I am standing here commending us all for stamping out the scourge of nonconsensual pornography.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Guam (Ms. BORDALLO).

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2052, the Protecting the Rights of IndiViduals Against Technological Exploitation Act, also known as the PRIVATE Act. This act will amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images.

As technology evolves, so, too, must our judicial systems; and it is clear, especially after the Marines United scandal, that there is a gap in the UCMJ. This bill addresses that gap and gives commanders the tools they need to address this horrific crime of posting or sharing intimate images that were previously privately shared.

The bill clearly states that distributing or broadcasting intimate visual images without consent would result in punishment. This change in the UCMJ will send a strong message to any bad actors in our military and remind them that honor, trust, and respect are paramount whether you are deployed or back home. Servicemembers will know that sharing, broadcasting, or posting intimate images are illegal and will be punished under the UCMJ.

I thank the gentlewoman from Arizona, Representative MCSALLY, for introducing this important legislation and diligently working it through the legislative process. I am also pleased to see such bipartisan support. Although the circumstances that led this bill to be written are appalling, it is heartening to see so many colleagues coming together today to make the necessary changes.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2052. This amendment to the UCMJ is very necessary and very timely.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Massachusetts (Ms. TSONGAS).

Ms. TSONGAS. Mr. Speaker, earlier this year, many of us heard of the Marines United Facebook page for the first time. On this page, women marines found that their intimate photos were posted without their knowledge and without their consent. Some had no idea these photos had ever been taken.

Beneath the photos, marine members of the Facebook group wrote obscene and abusive comments about their comrades. This betrayal of marines by marines disgracefully disrespects fellow members, sows the seeds of distrust, and undermines the unit cohesion so essential to military readiness, putting our national security at risk.

Today we bring a bill to the floor to make sure military members who have broadcasted or distributed certain private images are held accountable. H.R. 2052 creates a separate article under the Uniform Code of Military Justice that specifically criminalizes the wrongful sharing of intimate photos without explicit consent to do so.

H.R. 2052 sends a clear message to all servicemembers and to our military leadership that this kind of abusive behavior will not and must not be tolerated. Members from both sides of the aisle have come together, and I thank Representatives McSally and Speier for their leadership in support of this commonsense legislation, and I encourage all of my colleagues to vote for it.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL), my good friend and colleague, and the co-chair of the bipartisan Women's Caucus.

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank my great colleague from California and I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their leadership on a subject of urgency.

Mr. Speaker, in the strongest terms possible, I urge support of this bipartisan legislation called the PRIVATE Act that makes it illegal for military members to share explicit photos without consent.

Our Democratic Working Women's Group recently held a bipartisan hearing regarding the Marine United Facebook page where male marines posted thousands of nude photos of female servicemembers and veterans without their consent.

At this hearing, we heard the testimony of two courageous female marines whose privacy was violated with the nonconsensual posting of intimate photographs. They described their embarrassment, their anger, and the vitriolic harassment by their marine brothers that followed, with threats of rape and violence, and stomach-sickening posts like: ''We should throw female Marines into a tub of acid and rip off their eyelashes.''

Mr. Speaker, I am the proud mother of a United States Marine veteran, so I can tell you, I understand firsthand the selfless sacrifice a marine makes when he or she puts on their uniform.

So I say to those warriors whose honor was violated: We stand with you today to declare that you were targets of behavior that we will not tolerate; and we will seek to punish those who offended and prevent similar conduct in the future because that conduct is not only degrading to brave patriots, it threatens the safety and security of our Nation.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from New Hampshire (Ms. KUSTER), the chair of the Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence.

Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative MCSALLY and Representative JACKIE SPEIER for bringing us to the floor today.

I speak on behalf of H.R. 2052, the PRIVATE Act. I was deeply disturbed by the Marine United photo-sharing scandal, as were many of my colleagues, both men and women, Republican and Democrat.

Our Armed Forces are the greatest fighting forces the world has ever seen. It is unacceptable that members of the Marines sought out intimate photographs of their fellow soldiers and distributed them purposely online. Not only were the actions by the participants in the Marines United scandal morally repugnant, but they jeopardized our national security and endangered the security of both male and female marines. Women in the Armed Forces put their lives on the line every single day to defend our country, and they should not have their safety risked by their fellow marines.

I am proud to support H.R. 2052, the PRIVATE Act, which will update the Uniform Code of Military Justice to ensure that the type of explicit image sharing we saw in the Marines United scandal is expressly prohibited.

As the cofounder, with my colleague, JACKIE SPEIER, of the Bipartisan Task Force to End Sexual Violence, I understand the persistent challenges that the culture of sexual violence poses on our society.

The conversation around sexual violence is beginning to change, thanks in no small part to Members of this Congress on both sides of the aisle. This legislation will support broader cultural reform and improve the lives of our brave servicemembers.

This is an issue that transcends politics, and I am encouraged by the bipartisan support for the PRIVATE Act. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to my colleague from California (Mrs. DAVIS), the ranking member on the Democratic side of the Armed Services Committee.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for bringing this forward.

The Marines United website was a disgusting breach of trust, and I immediately called for the perpetrators to be prosecuted. I appreciate General Neller coming to Congress earlier this year, taking ownership of the problem, immediately establishing a task force, and conducting multimedia and personal engagements across the Marine Corps.

He said he would deal with this immediately and decisively, and we demand nothing less. I take him at his word, and he was clear in asking to be held accountable.

While the Navy and Marine Corps have updated policies regarding social media and established no-tolerance policies for nonconsensual pornography, these still need to apply across all the services and must be codified into law. For this reason, I support the PRIVATE Act, and I hope that we continue to work together with my colleagues to ensure that this bill becomes law.

Mr. Speaker, as the scandal unfolded, it became clear to me that, even from initial recruitment, servicemembers must be held to the highest ethical standard online, and prevented from joining the military should their behavior fail to meet that standard.

Our children live their lives online, and the laws need to be updated to reflect that. The issue of nonconsensual pornography, unfortunately, is prevalent across our society. It has no place anywhere, but especially not in our military ranks.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I have no further speakers. If the gentlewoman from California has no further speakers, I am prepared to close once the gentlewoman does.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to close, and, in so doing, I also want to make the point that our commitment to making sure that our armed services have the cohesion and readiness to serve requires us to take action on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

As a 26-year combat veteran, I am deeply disturbed, but not surprised by the scandal.

As a former commander, I know that you need to give commanders all the tools they need to hold perpetrators accountable. This is not just about good order and discipline. This is about the military mission. This bill gives commanders an additional tool in order to address this culture and to hold people accountable for their abhorrent behavior.

I want to say that I appreciate the strong support across the aisle and our side of the aisle. This is strong, bipartisan support. I would urge all of my colleagues to support the PRIVATE Act.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. MCSALLY. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I want to add my support for this legislation, and I thank the gentlewoman from California and the gentlewoman from Arizona for their longstanding service.

We have been dealing with bills dealing with sexual assault in the Judiciary Committee. Having listened to the young female soldiers who were impacted by Marines United, I know that this legislation that gives the military leadership additional tools to ensure that the depiction of women and others in the United States military, against their will, on social media, will not be tolerated and will not be viewed as an honorable act under the U.S. Military Code. Giving these tools will show that you will be punished and that men and women will be respected in the United States military. I ask colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. MCSALLY. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman THORNBERRY for his leadership on this issue.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. MCSALLY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2052.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1630

DHS STOP ASSET AND VEHICLE EXCESS ACT

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take from the Speaker's table the bill (H.R. 366) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet, and for other purposes, with the Senate amendments thereto, and concur in the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Clerk will report the Senate amendments.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendments:

(1) On page 6, line 17, insert *shall* after heads.

(2) On page 12, strike line 16 through page 14, and insert:

SEC. 3. INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.

The Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security shall—

(1) conduct a review of the implementation of subsection (c)(4) of section 701 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 341), as added by section 2 of this Act, for fiscal year 2019, which shall include analysis of the effectiveness of such subsection (c)(4) with respect to cost avoidance, savings realized, and component operations; and

(2) provide, upon request, to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives information regarding the review required under paragraph (1).

Mr. MCCAUL (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the Senate amendments.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2017

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1370) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1370

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. ENHANCED DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY COORDINATION THROUGH THE BLUE CAMPAIGN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subtitle C of title IV of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 231 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 434. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY BLUE CAMPAIGN.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized in the Department a unified, anti-human trafficking campaign to be known as the 'Blue Campaign'. As part of the Blue Campaign, the Secretary shall—

''(1) issue Department-wide guidance to appropriate personnel of the Department;

''(2) develop training programs for such personnel; and

''(3) coordinate departmental efforts, including training for such personnel.

''(b) GUIDANCE AND TRAINING.—The Blue Campaign shall provide guidance and training to appropriate personnel of the Department regarding the following:

''(1) Programs for such personnel, as well as Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial law enforcement entities, to help identify instances of human trafficking and potential connections to terrorist activities, including along the borders of the United States.

''(2) Systematic and routine information sharing between and among the components of the Department and the National Network of Fusion Centers regarding individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking and patterns and practices of human trafficking and potential connections to terrorist activities, including along the borders of the United States.

''(3) Techniques to identify suspected victims of trafficking along the borders of the United States.

''(4) Techniques specifically for Transportation Security Administration personnel to—

''(A) identify suspected victims of trafficking at airport security; and

''(B) serve as a liaison and resource to aviation workers and the traveling public.

''(5) Utilizing resources to educate partners and stakeholders and increase public awareness of human trafficking, such as indicator cards, fact sheets, pamphlets, posters, brochures, and radio and television campaigns.

''(6) Leveraging partnerships with governmental, non-governmental, and private sector organizations at the State and local levels to raise public awareness of human trafficking and potential connections to terrorist activities, including along the borders of the United States.

''(7) Any other activities determined necessary by the Secretary as part of the Blue Campaign.

''(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term 'human trafficking' means an act or practice described in paragraph (9) or (10) of section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).''.

(b) INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure that, consistent with the Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance required under subsection (a) of section 434 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (as added by subsection (a) of this section), information technology systems utilized within the Department to record and track information regarding individuals suspected or convicted of human trafficking (as such term is defined in such section 434) are capable of systematic and routine information sharing.

(c) OVERSIGHT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall report to the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate on the status and effectiveness of the Blue Campaign.

(d) AUTHORIZATION.—For each of fiscal years 2018 through 2022, $819,000 is authorized to carry out section 434 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by subsection (a) of this section.

(e) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 433 the following new item:

''Sec. 434. Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. VELA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of my bill, H.R. 1370, to combat human trafficking. According to the FBI, human trafficking, which includes forced labor, domestic servitude, and commercial sex trafficking, is the third largest criminal activity in the world. It is a multibillion-dollar industry that enslaves 20 million innocent victims around the world.

We need a collaborative multiagency approach to combat this criminal activity. My bill recognizes and supports the work of the Department of Homeland Security to join these partners to combat this scourge on our society. This bill authorizes a vital lifesaving campaign at the Department to prevent human trafficking.

This campaign is called the Blue Campaign. It is a Department-wide effort to conduct outreach and raise awareness of trafficking. It provides training and materials to those in the best position to identify trafficking victims. This campaign works in collaboration with law enforcement, governmental and private organizations to identify and save those victims.

The Blue Campaign has entered into agreements to provide training, raise awareness, and combat human trafficking. Currently, it enlists the help of numerous organizations who have witnessed trafficking such as airlines, hotels, truck stops, convenient stores, and package delivery services.

The Department uses the resources and expertise of the CBP, ICE, USCIS, and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers to help with this effort. Of note, my bill adds the Transportation Security Administration to this fight by training its personnel to recognize the victims of trafficking and pull these victims out of its viscous cycle.

My bill also requires the Department to share information on patterns of trafficking and possible connections with terrorist activity, both internally and with the National Network of Fusion Centers.

In 2014, I held a field hearing in Houston, Texas, to address the issue of human trafficking in our major cities, and we heard personally from the victims their stories of sexual abuse and human trafficking. That hearing highlighted the importance of collaboration and community involvement in combating this terrible crime. This DHS campaign furthers these collaboration efforts.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all Members to support this legislation and the efforts of the Department to address human trafficking.

I thank Chairman GOODLATTE of the Judiciary Committee for his cooperation in bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, May 5, 2017.

Hon. MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN MCCAUL: I write with respect to H.R. 1370, the ''Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act.'' As a result of your having consulted with us on provisions within H.R. 1370 that fall within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary, I forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

The Judiciary Committee takes this action with our mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of H.R. 1370 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over subject matter contained in this or similar legislation and that our committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. Our committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and asks that you support any such request.

I would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1370 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included your committee report and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 1370.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY,
Washington, DC, May 11, 2017.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN GOODLATTE: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1370, the ''Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017.'' I appreciate your support in bringing this legislation before the House of Representatives, and accordingly, understand that the Committee on Judiciary will forego further consideration of the bill.

The Committee on Homeland Security concurs with the mutual understanding that by foregoing consideration of this bill at this time, the Judiciary does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this bill or similar legislation in the future. In addition, should a conference on this bill be necessary, I would support your request to have the Committee on Judiciary represented on the conference committee.

I will insert copies of this exchange in the report and the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House floor. I thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL,
Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security.

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1370, the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017.

Mr. Speaker, human trafficking is a $32 billion-per-year global industry, making it one of the most profitable forms of transnational crime with more than 20 million victims worldwide. Each year an estimated 17,500 innocent people are trafficked into the United States; almost half of those individuals are children.

Trafficking victims can be of any age, race, gender, or nationality, and are largely found in workplaces within the manufacturing, agriculture, hospitality, and domestic service industries. Since 2010, the mission of the Department of Homeland Security's Blue Campaign has been to bring DHS components together with Federal, State,

and local law enforcement agencies, private industry, and other nongovernmental entities to combat human trafficking.

The Blue Campaign has provided the Department with the necessary structure to uniformly train personnel in its components to identify and investigate these criminal activities. The Blue Campaign has proven an effective mechanism through which DHS and its law enforcement partners collaborate to dismantle human trafficking networks across the country and bring perpetrators to justice.

The public awareness and outreach efforts launched through the Blue Campaign provide the general public, nongovernmental organizations, and private sector entities with tools to be active partners in the Federal Government's efforts to assist victims of human trafficking and prevent others from being exploited.

Earlier this year, DHS recognized its partners in the transportation and hospitality industries for training their employees and customers about how they can help combat human trafficking by identifying the signs and reporting suspected incidents.

Over the years, the program has proven to be an important, multifaceted tool that leverages both government and private sector resources with the goal of ending the exploitation of vulnerable people. H.R. 1370 codifies the important program and emphasizes the importance of clear guidance and training for all Blue Campaign partners.

This bill also underscores the importance of timely and routine information sharing amongst DHS components to ensure unity of effort in preventing and disrupting human trafficking. As a cosponsor of H.R. 1370, I believe that it is our responsibility as Members of Congress to do whatever it takes to stop the illegal and immoral smuggling of innocent people into the United States by transnational criminal organizations.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my House colleagues to support H.R. 1370, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from South Dakota (Mrs. NOEM).

Mrs. NOEM. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairman also for bringing up this important issue today.

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in support of H.R. 1370, the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act. A few years ago, law enforcement officers in South Dakota placed undercover ads on the internet, and they weren't pretending to sell illegal drugs. What they were pretending to sell was young girls.

In less than 2 days, over 100 individuals responded to that ad. Many of them were hoping to buy children for sex. Similar operations were conducted across the State in following months, and they had similar results. Many times, when folks think of human trafficking, they often picture a place far away overseas, but the fact is that it is happening right here—in our backyards many times.

Those being targeted are often children, 12 or 14 years old, sometimes even younger. They are forced to turn tricks up to 50 times a day while their pimps work hard to get them addicted to alcohol and drugs so that they can further control them and their lives. It also deepens their dependence on their trafficker.

Last Congress, we passed significant antitrafficking legislation, which I am incredibly proud of, but there is still more that needs to be done. Time and again, South Dakota advocates tell me that awareness remains a challenge, but a challenge that we can work together to overcome. That is ultimately the purpose of this legislation that we are considering today.

Through the enhanced Blue Campaign, we can offer Americans from all walks of life the information that they need to spot trafficking in their backyards. If more people are aware of distress signals and how to respond, we can move faster towards ending human trafficking together.

Mr. Speaker, for this reason, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1370.

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE).

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for bringing up this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this past February, in my hometown of Houston, Texas, we hosted the 51st Super Bowl. For most Americans, the Super Bowl is a fun-filled day spent with friends, family, and cheering on our favorite team. But for human traffickers, the Super Bowl has become an annual opportunity to expand their evil, criminal empire.

Studies show that big events like the Super Bowl create large upticks in the trafficking and purchasing of sex trafficking victims. In order to counteract this, the Department of Homeland Security, as a part of its Blue Campaign initiative, began preparing months in advance before the Super Bowl in Houston.

Through the Blue Campaign, the Department of Homeland Security raises public awareness, it forges antitrafficking partnerships, and brings suspected human traffickers to justice. Most importantly, it rescues victims of the sex trafficking trade.

In advance of the last Super Bowl, the Blue Campaign worked with local, State, and Federal law enforcement agencies on the ground, as well as participating in several congressional briefings. One such briefing I hosted here in Washington.

Everybody working together, all different law enforcement agencies, State, local, and Federal, had a great result in what occurred in Houston. Over 750 people were arrested, and 86 victims were rescued. Many more were likely spared being forced into the trafficking industry.

Having worked closely with the Blue Campaign on this, and many other operations, I have seen firsthand the important role the Department of Homeland Security has in fighting the scourge of human trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, trafficking is second only to the drug trade in the amount of money, criminal money, it brings in. And the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act will ensure that the critically important program continues to provide safety to victims and gets some justice to the traffickers and those would-be buyers of little children.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the chairman for this legislation.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. VELA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1370 was unanimously approved by the Committee on Homeland Security earlier this year. The partnerships that DHS has established through the Blue Campaign are critical to stopping criminal activity that comes with a tragically high human cost.

By leading the charge and identifying and closing all possible avenues through which human traffickers smuggle people into the United States, DHS plays a critical role in ensuring the safety of children and other innocent people. Joint, concerted efforts that bring together law enforcement, nongovernmental entities, and private industry, and raise public awareness of this criminal activity, are important to ending the practice altogether.

We must continue to support this unity of effort in order to aid and protect victims of human trafficking, and bring those who exploit them to justice.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman MCCAUL for his leadership in this effort, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1370, and I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1645

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Let me also thank my colleague, Mr. VELA, for his steadfast support of this legislation, as well as the entire Homeland Security Committee, which has worked in a very bipartisan fashion on this very important issue.

This is not a matter of politics. It is a matter of saving our children from trafficking and sex abuse. We have all heard the stories. We have heard some of those here today, but I think there is nothing more criminal, other than perhaps what ISIS did yesterday, than the exploitation of children. Of course, that is what ISIS did yesterday in killing innocent children and teenagers outside a concert hall.

The issue of human trafficking brings it to full bear: bringing children into

this country and exploiting them, selling them on the black market, and sexually abusing them for a very long time.

This bill is important and necessary. It really supports, codifies, and gives congressional backing and support to a very important program within the Department, and that is the Blue Campaign.

I also want to thank Secretary Kelly of Homeland Security for showing the leadership to come forward with this campaign to address this horrible crime against our children and those moving into adulthood.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. MCCAUL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1370, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1973, PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT OF 2017; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1761, PROTECTING AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2017; AND PROVIDING FOR PROCEEDINGS DURING THE PERIOD FROM MAY 26, 2017, THROUGH JUNE 5, 2017

Mr. BUCK, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 115–152) on the resolution (H. Res. 352) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1761) to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from May 26, 2017, through June 5, 2017, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

VETERANS APPEALS IMPROVEMENT AND MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2017

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on the motion to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2288) to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes, as amended, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. ROE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, as amended.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 418, nays 0, not voting 12, as follows:

[Roll No. 273]

YEAS—418

Abraham
Adams
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Arrington
Babin
Bacon
Banks (IN)
Barletta
Barr
Barragán
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Bera
Bergman
Beyer
Biggs
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Blumenauer
Blunt Rochester
Bonamici
Bost
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (MD)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Budd
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Capuano
Carbajal
Cárdenas
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Cheney
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comer
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Correa
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crist
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Curbelo (FL)
Davidson
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Demings
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DeSaulnier
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Donovan
Doyle, Michael F.
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Dunn
Ellison
Emmer
Engel
Eshoo
Espaillat
Estes (KS)
Esty (CT)
Evans
Farenthold
Faso
Ferguson
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gaetz
Gallagher
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Gibbs
Gohmert
Gonzalez (TX)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gottheimer
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffith
Grijalva
Grothman
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hanabusa
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings
Heck
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins (LA)
Higgins (NY)
Hill
Himes
Holding
Hollingsworth
Hoyer
Hudson
Huffman
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jayapal
Jeffries
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (GA)
Johnson (LA)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Jordan
Joyce (OH)
Kaptur
Katko
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (MS)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Khanna
Kihuen
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger
Knight
Krishnamoorthi
Kuster (NH)
Kustoff (TN)
Labrador
LaHood
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latta
Lawrence
Lawson (FL)
Lee
Levin
Lewis (GA)
Lewis (MN)
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham, M.
Luján, Ben Ray
Lynch
MacArthur
Maloney, Carolyn B.
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Marshall
Massie
Mast
Matsui
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McEachin
McGovern
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mitchell
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moore
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Noem
Nolan
Norcross
Nunes
O'Halleran
O'Rourke
Olson
Palazzo
Pallone
Palmer
Panetta
Pascrell
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pittenger
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Raskin
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney, Francis
Rooney, Thomas J.
Ros-Lehtinen
Rosen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Roybal-Allard
Royce (CA)
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Russell
Rutherford
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez
Sanford
Sarbanes
Scalise
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Smucker
Soto
Speier
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Suozzi
Takano
Taylor
Tenney
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Trott
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Zeldin

NOT VOTING—12

Cleaver
Deutch
Fudge
Hice, Jody B.
Huizenga
Johnson, Sam
Lieu, Ted
Newhouse
Rice (NY)
Swalwell (CA)
Tiberi
Wasserman Schultz

□ 1710

Mr. CAPUANO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. MCEACHIN, and Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS changed their vote from "nay" to "yea."

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.J. RES. 13

Mr. BLUM. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to remove my name as cosponsor of H.J. Res. 13.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BERGMAN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Iowa?

There was no objection.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO OFFER RESOLUTION RAISING A QUESTION OF THE PRIVILEGES OF THE HOUSE

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to clause 2(a)(1) of rule IX, I rise to give notice of my intent to raise a question of the privileges of the House.

The form of the resolution is as follows:

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President shall immediately release his tax return information to Congress and the American people.

Whereas, in the United States' system of checks and balances, Congress has a responsibility to hold the executive branch of government to a fair and equal standard of transparency ensuring the public interest is placed first;

Whereas, according to the Tax History Project, every President since Gerald Ford has disclosed their tax return information to the public;

Whereas, tax returns provide an important baseline of reasonable information including whether the President paid taxes, ownership interests, charitable donations made, and whether tax deductions have been exploited;

Whereas, disclosure of the President's tax returns could help those investigating Russian influence in the 2016 election understand the President's financial ties to the Russian Federation and Russian citizens, including debts owed and whether he shares any partnership interests, equity interests, joint ventures, licensing agreements with Russia or Russians;

Whereas, the President recently fired Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, under whose leadership the FBI was investigating whether the Trump campaign colluded with Russia to influence the 2016 election;

Whereas, President Trump reportedly stated to Russian officials during a White House meeting that he fired Director Comey to ease pressure on the ongoing investigation of Russia's influence in the 2016 election;

Whereas, Senate Russia investigators have requested information from the Treasury Department's criminal investigation division, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, or FinCEN, which handles cases of money laundering, for information related to President Trump, his top officials, and campaign aides. FinCEN has been investigating allegations of foreign money-laundering through purchases of U.S. real estate;

Whereas, the President's tax returns would show us whether he has foreign bank accounts and how much profit he receives from his ownership in myriad partnerships;

Whereas, Donald Trump, Jr., said The Trump Organization saw money ''pouring in from Russia'' and that ''Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets'';

Whereas, the White House will not confirm whether the President has filed a 2016 tax return;

Whereas, Congress gave itself the authority to review an individual's tax returns to investigate and reveal possible conflicts of interest of executive branch officials involved dating back to the Teapot Dome scandal;

Whereas, it has been reported that federal prosecutors have issued grand jury subpoenas to associates of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn seeking business records as part of the ongoing probe into Russian involvement in the 2016 election;

Whereas, according to his 2016 candidate filing with the Federal Election Commission, the President has 564 financial positions in companies located in the United States and around the world;

Whereas, against the advice of ethics attorneys and the Office of Government Ethics, the President has refused to divest his ownership stake in his businesses and can still withdraw funds at any time from the trust of which he is the sole beneficiary;

Whereas, the Emoluments Clause was included in the U.S. Constitution for the express purpose of preventing federal officials from accepting any ''present, Emolument, Office, or Title . . . from any King, Prince, or foreign state'';

Whereas, the Chairmen of the Ways and Means Committee, Joint Committee on Taxation and Senate Finance Committee have the authority to request the President's tax returns under section 6103 of the tax code;

Whereas, the Joint Committee on Taxation reviewed the tax returns of President Richard Nixon in 1974 and made the information public;

Whereas, the Ways and Means Committee used IRC 6103 authority in 2014 to make public the confidential tax information of 51 taxpayers;

Whereas, Director Comey has testified that tax returns are a common tool in investigations because they can show income and motives;

Whereas, the American people have the right to know whether or not their President is operating under conflicts of interest related to international affairs, tax reform, government contracts, or otherwise:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the House of Representatives shall, one, immediately request the tax return information of Donald J. Trump for tax years 2006 through 2015 for review in closed executive session by the Committee on Ways and Means, as provided under section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code and vote to report the information therein to the full House of Representatives;

Two, support transparency in government and the longstanding tradition of Presidents and candidates disclosing their tax returns.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under rule IX, a resolution offered from the floor by a Member other than the majority leader or the minority leader as a question of the privileges of the House has immediate precedence only at a time designated by the Chair within 2 legislative days after the resolution is properly noticed.

Pending that designation, the form of the resolution noticed by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SÁNCHEZ) will appear in the RECORD at this point.

The Chair will not at this point determine whether the resolution constitutes a question of privilege. That determination will be made at the time designated for consideration of the resolution.

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, does the Chair have a designated time for the debate on the resolution?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Speaker will inform the gentlewoman of the time.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on the additional motion to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Any record vote on the postponed question will be taken at a later time.

PUT TRAFFICKING VICTIMS FIRST ACT OF 2017

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2473) to ensure compliance with the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, to make strides toward eradicating human trafficking, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2473

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2017''.

SEC. 2. REPORT ON SAFE HARBOR LAWS.

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, acting through the Director of the Office for Victims of Crime, shall issue a report to be posted on a publicly available website that includes—

(1) the impact of State safe harbor laws and associated services on the re-victimization of victims of trafficking (as such term is defined in section 103(15) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102(15))), the recovery of victims, victim outcomes, and prosecutions of traffickers; and

(2) best practices and recommendations on the development and implementation of effective State safe harbor laws that promote full recovery of victims of trafficking and do not interfere with prosecutions of traffickers.

SEC. 3. TRAINING FOR PROSECUTIONS OF TRAFFICKERS AND SUPPORT FOR STATE SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 107(b)(2)(B)(ii) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended to read as follows:

''(ii) 5 percent for training and technical assistance, to be provided in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, including with respect to—

''(I) increasing capacity and expertise on security for and protection of service providers from intimidation or retaliation for their activities;

''(II) ''investigating, prosecuting, and preventing human trafficking through a trauma-informed and victim-centered approach that provides services and protections for victims of trafficking;

''(III) facilitating the provision of evidence-based, trauma-informed care and mental health services to victims of trafficking;

''(IV) ensuring that all victims of trafficking, including United States citizens, lawful permanent residents, and foreign nationals, are eligible for services;

''(V) ensuring that law enforcement officers and prosecutors make every attempt to determine whether an individual's participation in human trafficking is free from force, fraud, or coercion of any means before arresting them for, or charging them with, an offense;

''(VI) effectively prosecuting traffickers and individuals who patronize or solicit children for sex, and facilitating access for child victims of trafficking to the same type of court procedures and legal protections accessible to child victims of sexual assault, rape, child sexual abuse, or incest, and clarifying the right of child victims of trafficking to not be treated as criminals as a result of their victimization; and

''(VII) encouraging States to identify the locations of victims of trafficking and serve those victims, including through efforts that utilize internet outreach, through methods informed by survivors of human trafficking, and by offering help and services that are responsive to victims' needs in their communities.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect on October 1, 2017.

SEC. 4. WORKING TO DEVELOP METHODOLOGIES TO ASSESS PREVALENCE OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

(a) WORKING GROUP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Institute of Justice, in consultation with the Director of the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, shall establish an expert working group, which shall include survivors of human trafficking, experts on sex and labor trafficking, representatives from organizations collecting data on human trafficking, and law enforcement officers. The working group shall, utilizing, to the extent practicable, existing efforts of agencies, task forces, States, cities, research institutions, and organizations—

(A) identify the methodological and practical barriers hampering data collection on sex and labor trafficking;

(B) identify the information that should be collected, and how that information should be collected; and

(C) recommend practices that could be standardized as replicable best practices to promote better data comparison, aggregation, and analysis.

(2) PILOT TESTING.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Institute of Justice shall implement a series of pilot studies to test promising methodologies studied under paragraph (1).

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Institute of Justice, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Homeland Security, and the Director of the Human Smuggling and Trafficking Center, shall submit to Congress a report, which includes—

(A) the efforts made in developing robust, comprehensive methodologies to estimate the prevalence of human trafficking at the national and regional levels;

(B) best practices for determining the trends of human trafficking in the United States;

(C) evaluations of the effectiveness of current policies and procedures to address the needs of victims of trafficking, including appropriate housing and services from trained trauma-informed care service providers; and

(D) an analysis of the varying characteristics of victims of trafficking in different regions, including age, gender, race or ethnicity, involvement in the child welfare system, involvement in the juvenile or criminal justice system, the number of foster care placements, the number of congregate care placements, and whether an individual is a victim of sex trafficking or labor trafficking, and recommendations for how to address the unique vulnerabilities of different victims.

(2) AVAILABILITY OF REPORT.—The report required under paragraph (1) shall be made publicly available on the website of the Department of Justice.

(3) INPUT FROM RELEVANT PARTIES.—In developing the report under paragraph (1), the Director shall seek input from the United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, victims of trafficking, human trafficking survivor advocates, service providers for victims of sex and labor trafficking, and the President's Interagency Task Force on Human Trafficking.

(c) SURVEY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of the National Institute of Justice, in coordination with Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, and private organizations, including victim service providers and expert researchers, shall develop and execute a survey of survivors seeking and receiving services through a model agreed upon by service providers for victims of trafficking, government entities, and research experts to better understand where and how victims of trafficking are accessing services, how they are referred to services, including referrals by first responders, how assessment tools work to identify victims of trafficking, and to help estimate the prevalence of human trafficking and victim identification in the United States. Survey results shall be made publicly available on the website of the Department of Justice.

(d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out this section.

SEC. 5. REPORT ON PROSECUTORS SEEKING MANDATORY RESTITUTION IN TRAFFICKING CASES.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Administrative Office of the United States Courts, shall submit to Congress a report on efforts to increase mandatory restitution orders and use of asset forfeiture to provide restitution to victims of trafficking that shall be posted on a publicly available website, which shall include the following:

(1) Information on the Department of Justice's training programs on mandatory restitution and the use of asset forfeiture to provide restitution to victims of trafficking, and recommendations of necessary additional training to ensure mandatory restitution is ordered in all relevant human trafficking cases.

(2) An assessment of obstacles that continue to prevent Federal prosecutors and Federal courts from ordering restitution.

(3) An assessment of whether the asset forfeiture provisions in the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 and the amendments made by that Act have helped increase requests to transfer forfeited proceeds for restitution, including how many requests have been made and how many of those requests have been approved, and whether United States Attorneys offices are properly informed about requesting transfers.

(4) An assessment of how establishing trauma-informed, victim-centered investigative and prosecutorial procedures can help improve mandatory restitution orders, including by encouraging victims of trafficking to cooperate in criminal cases, equipping victims of trafficking with proper assistance during criminal proceedings, and helping victims of trafficking secure mandatory restitution.

(5) The annual number and percentage of Federal cases related to human trafficking, separating sex trafficking and labor trafficking, during the period beginning on June 1, 2015, and ending on the date of the enactment of this Act, in which restitution was ordered, and the amount of restitution ordered in each case.

(6) Data on the participation and non-participation of victims of trafficking in criminal proceedings, data on the participation and nonparticipation of victims of trafficking in witness protection programs and services, and recommendations for encouraging the participation of victims of trafficking in such proceedings.

SEC. 6. SENSE OF CONGRESS ENCOURAGING STATES TO ADOPT PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING.

Congress recognizes and applauds the State legislative bodies that have taken tremendous steps to adopt protections and services for victims of trafficking. Congress encourages States to do the following:

(1) Uphold the basic rights and dignity of human trafficking survivors.

(2) Adopt a survivor-centered approach to addressing human trafficking that ensures the safety, confidentiality, and well-being of victims of trafficking, while recognizing symptoms of trauma and coping mechanisms that may impact victims' interactions with law enforcement, the justice system, and service providers.

(3) Implement screening mechanisms for all children entering child welfare services, the juvenile justice system, or the criminal justice system to identify child victims of trafficking and connect them with appropriate services, including appropriate housing and services from trained trauma-informed care service providers, and to try to identify foreign nationals who may be victims of trafficking.

(4) Ensure that child victims of trafficking are provided with a range of protections, including access to child welfare services, trauma-informed programming, and the same legal rights afforded to other children who experience sexual abuse, rape, or incest, including ensuring that—

(A) criminals who exploit child victims of sex trafficking, including offenders who purchase, solicit, or obtain a child for purposes of engaging in a commercial sex act, face serious penalties and sentences under sex trafficking laws, and are not given lesser sentences; and

(B) child victims of trafficking are never referred to as ''child prostitutes'' or ''underage sex workers'' in law or official documents and proceedings.

(5) Develop a 24-hour emergency response plan to provide victims trafficking with immediate protection and support when they are first identified, which may include physically moving victims of trafficking to a place of safety, attending to the immediate

medical and emotional needs of survivors, assessing whether survivors are under risk for harm, retaliation, or intimidation, and directly connecting survivors with victim advocates, housing, and service providers.

(6) Adopt protections for victims of trafficking that include the right—

(A) to be treated as a victim of crime and afforded justice, respect, and dignity;

(B) to protection if the victim's safety is at risk or if there is danger of harm, retaliation, or recapture by the trafficker;

(C) to comprehensive trauma-informed, long-term, culturally competent care and healing services oriented toward emotional, psychological, and family healing;

(D) to evidence-based screening and assessment tools, treatment plans, and therapy to address traumatic stress and associated mental health symptoms;

(E) to safe and effective emergency and long-term housing; education, vocational, and job assistance and training; mentoring programs; language assistance; drug and substance abuse services; and legal services;

(F) for child sex trafficking victims to be treated as children in need of child protective services and to be served through the child welfare system, where appropriate, in place of the juvenile justice system;

(G) for all victims of trafficking, including United States citizens, lawful permanent residents, and foreign nationals, to be eligible for services;

(H) to have convictions and adjudications related to prostitution and nonviolent offenses vacated and such records cleared and expunged if offenses were committed as a direct result of the victim being trafficked, and protection for foreign nationals from being removed, being determined to be inadmissible, or losing any immigration benefit because of such conviction or arrests;

(I) to the same type of court procedures and legal protections accessible to victims of sexual assault, rape, child sexual abuse, or incest, including the right to not be treated as a criminal; and

(J) to retain all rights regardless of whether the crime has been reported to law enforcement.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 2473, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2473, the Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2017, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Human trafficking has plagued communities and neighborhoods across America. Victims have endured horrific trauma, violence, and reoccurring abuse. As a result, there is a tremendous need for expanded victim services, improved data on the prevalence and trends of human trafficking, and effective mechanisms to identify and rescue trafficking victims.

H.R. 2473 takes reasonable steps to increase victim services while improving upon the tools already available to combat human trafficking. The bill directs the Attorney General to provide a report on the effectiveness of State safe harbor laws to ensure these laws are based upon a survivor-centered approach.

In addition to the report, the bill instructs States to recognize coping mechanisms and the symptoms of trauma as local law enforcement interacts with victims of human trafficking.

Furthermore, the legislation provides for increased training and technical assistance for State and Federal agencies, prosecutors, and law enforcement on how to take a victim-centered approach to preventing human trafficking. This provision promotes evidence-based training in order to improve the physical and mental health services provided to victims.

The bill's focus on supporting victims continues as H.R. 2473 instructs the National Institute of Justice to establish detailed methodologies to review the modern trends and detail the prevalence of human trafficking throughout the United States. The survey will not only assess how victims of trafficking are accessing services, but, in addition, help estimate the prevalence of human trafficking in the United States.

Moreover, H.R. 2473 will provide assistance to trafficking victims seeking restitution, many of whom still face many obstacles in Federal court. The bill directs the Attorney General to report on efforts to increase mandatory restitution for victims by providing Congress with data involving the number of Federal cases related to human trafficking in which restitution was ordered, as well as the participation rate of victims in trafficking criminal proceedings.

Finally, the bill expresses the sense of Congress that States should implement trauma-informed, victim-centered care for all trafficking victims.

Mr. Speaker, Congress' intent is clear: Protecting victims from the heinous crime of human trafficking is of utmost concern. I commend the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) for introducing this important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE,
Washington, DC, May 23, 2017.

Hon. BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write to confirm our mutual understanding with respect to H.R. 2473, Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2017. Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Education and the Workforce with regard to H.R. 2473 on those matters within my committee's jurisdiction and agreeing to make improvements to the legislation to address concerns.

The Committee on Education and the Workforce will not delay further consideration of this bill. However, I do so only with the understanding this procedural route will not be construed to prejudice my committee's jurisdictional interest and prerogatives on this bill or any other similar legislation and will not be considered as precedent for consideration of matters of jurisdictional interest to my committee in the future.

I respectfully request your support for the appointment of outside conferees from the Committee on Education and the Workforce should this bill or a similar bill be considered in a conference with the Senate. I also request you include our exchange of letters on this matter in the committee report and in the Congressional Record during consideration of this bill on the House Floor. Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chairwoman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, May 23, 2017.

Hon. VIRGINIA FOXX,
Chair, Committee on Education & the Workforce, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN FOXX: Thank you for consulting with the Committee on the Judiciary and agreeing to be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2473, the ''Enforcing Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act,'' so that the bill may proceed expeditiously to the House floor.

I agree that your forgoing further action on this measure does not in any way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of your committee or rejudice its jurisdictional prerogatives on this bill or similar legislation in the future. I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from your committee to any House-Senate conference on this legislation.

I will seek to place our letters on H.R. 2473 in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to continuing to work together as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

BOB GOODLATTE,
Chairman.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2473, the Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2017.

I congratulate the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS) for the introduction of this legislation.

This bill is intended to improve the implementation of the Justice for Victims Trafficking Act of 2015. The 2015 act expanded the Federal response to trafficking concerning services and benefits for victims, criminal justice, domestic sex trafficking of children, and interagency coordination and training.

I support H.R. 2473 for several reasons. To begin with, this measure will strengthen the effectiveness of the 2015 act in various ways. For example, H.R. 2473 requires that training be provided for prosecutions of traffickers. When children fall prey to the sex trade and

then are treated as criminals rather than victims, their injuries are compounded.

We had the first human trafficking hearing of any committee in Houston, Texas, just a few years ago under the auspices of the Homeland Security Committee. Our committee determined this very point: that children fall prey and then become victims of the criminal justice system.

That is not the way to deal with our children who are victims, innocent children who have been turned into human traffic products by the heinous traffickers. As such, this training is critical to ensure that human trafficking victims are treated as victims and afforded justice, respect, and dignity.

Second, H.R. 2473 establishes a working group to develop best practices or best methods to assess the prevalence of human trafficking. We know that there is a growing epidemic of abhorrent practices of sex trafficking, and we must consider all methods to help law enforcement stop these crimes.

The working group will identify barriers that hamper human trafficking data collection and identify what information should be collected, as well as ascertain current practices being used by different agencies and organizations that can be standardized into best practices. As a result, H.R. 2473 will help ensure the most effective prevention practices are standardized so that perpetrators of sex trafficking are ultimately brought to justice.

Lastly, the legislation encourages States to adopt protections for sex trafficking victims. These victims are often very afraid to seek help, particularly from law enforcement because of the risk that they will be treated as criminals again rather than victims. H.R. 2473 recognizes the critical fact that children involved in sex trafficking are victims and not criminals. They absolutely should not be treated as criminals.

In acknowledgement of this fact, the bill identifies a broad range of important initiatives that States should undertake that would provide meaningful assistance to these victims: upholding basic rights, facilitating ways to identify child trafficking, providing emergency long-term housing. Each of these initiatives should help ensure that these victims are not revictimized and help enable them to be guided back to a normalized life.

Mr. Speaker, for all of these reasons, I am pleased to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as she may consume to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. WAGNER), the chief sponsor of this legislation.

Mrs. WAGNER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) for his leadership on this area of human trafficking, along with the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), my good friend, for all of her support on this human trafficking issue.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the Put Trafficking Victims First Act to the House of Representatives. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to address the concerns of victims of human trafficking across our country.

Too often, victims of trafficking are overlooked and underserved. This must stop. America needs to afford trafficking victims the same justice, protections, and dignity that other victims of crime receive.

In my home State of Missouri, I have met with countless survivors, along with survivors across this country, and I have listened to their painful stories. They need help to rebuild their lives, and that is exactly what my bill will do.

□ 1730

One important place to start is in the courtroom, where we need victim-centered practices oriented toward justice and recovery. For example, victims technically have access to mandatory restitution in Federal courts, but the sad reality is that, according to one estimate, sex trafficking victims get restitution in only 14 percent of Federal sex trafficking cases. This, Mr. Speaker, is unacceptable. My bill will direct the Attorney General to make mandatory restitution mandatory and implement victim-friendly procedures in Federal criminal cases.

Another big problem is that we just don't have good data on how to identify and rescue victims and put them on a path toward success. We don't really know where to find victims, what portions may be coming from foster care, or what their age, ethnicity, or other characteristics are. We can't help them if we can't find them. So we desperately need good data and reporting in order to improve victim outreach.

To answer this need, my bill establishes a national working group to develop robust methodologies to determine the prevalence and trends of tracking and evaluating how to best identify victims and address their needs. My bill will establish a national survey of survivors so we can better understand how victims are accessing help.

Yet another problem is that we are failing to provide trauma-informed care to victims, care that would help victims recover and cooperate with criminal investigations so we can put pimps and buyers behind bars. Lack of help for victims in the justice system can lead to revictimization, or even result in victims being criminalized for offenses they were forced to commit.

That is why we will train agencies, law enforcement, and prosecutors across the country to implement victim-centered approaches to investigating and preventing trafficking. We encourage law enforcement and prosecutors to make every attempt to determine whether an individual's participation in trafficking is, in fact, free from fraud, force, or coercion before arresting or charging them.

Finally, victims of trafficking are mostly served at the State level, so it is critical that States improve how they respond to victims. My bill encourages States to improve outreach, screen children entering child welfare services and the justice system, screen foreign nationals who may be labor trafficked, create safe harbor laws, and develop emergency response plans.

Mr. Speaker, together we can get victims of trafficking out of dangerous and abusive situations and create better, more accessible trauma-informed services. I urge my colleagues to put trafficking victims first and to support this legislation.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the distinguished gentlewoman from California (Ms. BASS), the original cosponsor of this legislation and one of the champions of protecting children and a leader of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2473, the Put Trafficking Victims First Act of 2017. I thank Ranking Member JACKSON LEE, Chairman GOODLATTE, and also Representative ANN WAGNER of Missouri for her leadership in combating trafficking in America. The importance of a bipartisan approach cannot be overstated or diminished.

Over the years, we have made tremendous progress, but the work is far from over. The Put Trafficking Victims First Act is a great first step forward in addressing the perilous deficiencies in sex trafficking policies and services in America.

As an original cosponsor of this bill, I am grateful for the inclusion of my amendments that serve to further support and strengthen this important legislation by providing necessary language and focus on young victims in the child welfare system.

In drafting legislation that calls for data collection assessments to help identify and implement effective and responsive models of justice and relief services, we must always be cognizant of the need to draw awareness and find solutions to eradicate the devastating epidemic of young children who are in the U.S. child welfare system from becoming victims of sex trafficking.

In particular, it is imperative that we better identify and screen the characteristics of children and youth involved in the child welfare and justice systems and that we provide greater access to appropriate housing and services from trained trauma-informed care service providers. Far too often, we hear stories about victims who cannot access housing, shelter, or mental healthcare and are unable to expunge or seal their criminal records and are treated like criminals rather than victims.

As the cofounder of the Congressional Caucus on Foster Youth, I am

particularly concerned about what we are doing to combat the devastating epidemic of young girls in the foster care system falling prey to child exploitation and sex trafficking. I hear horrific stories of foster girls who have been trafficked far too often, and I hear that the average age of a girl being involved in trafficking is 12 years old.

Mr. Speaker, this week we have over 100 youth here from 98 different congressional districts who will be shadowing their Members of Congress tomorrow. We met with the youth yesterday, and a number of them stepped forward and talked about being involved in the trafficking system and how they fell through the cracks in child welfare.

It is important that we remember that the purpose of the child welfare system is to protect children who are abused or neglected. When we take custody of these children, then we—meaning the local, State, or Federal Government—in effect become their parents. So if your own child showed up missing and you don't do anything about it, then obviously you are considered responsible. This is exactly what is happening with child sex trafficking in the United States.

H.R. 2473 further encourages States to implement screening mechanisms for all children entering the child welfare system and criminal and juvenile justice systems to better identify child trafficking and connect them with appropriate services. I urge my colleagues to vote for H.R. 2473.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE), a member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman GOODLATTE for the time and also his work on this issue of human sex trafficking in the United States. I support this legislation.

I also compliment Congresswoman WAGNER, Congresswoman BASS, Congresswoman MALONEY, and Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE and other women. I mention that because when we presented the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act 2 years ago and worked on that massive legislation that is excellent legislation, I am convinced that it was the women in the United States House of Representatives who got it done. They made sure that this legislation passed, and then they trotted down the hallway to the Senate and—I will use the word—''encouraged'' our Senators to take the bill up, and it passed there, and President Obama did sign the legislation. I am convinced there is nothing more powerful than a woman who has made up her mind, and the women in this House made up their mind about human sex trafficking. I just wanted to point that out.

This legislation is important. There are many stories. I am going to talk about a 9-year-old girl who lived not far from where we are today here in the United States Capitol. When Ashley's mother died, she was left alone. Like any lost and lonely child, she sought the comfort that she needed of love and safety. A woman came in to Ashley's life, offering her the care that Ashley was looking for as a 9-year-old: comfort and love. Ashley felt like she was safe for the first time since she had lost her mother. She was an orphan in Washington, D.C. Little did she know that the woman who was being nice to her was faking it all because she was grooming Ashley to be a sex slave here in Washington.

You see, traffickers exploit the vulnerabilities of victims, destroying their self-worth and their hope for a better life. In some cases, traffickers steal the soul of young children. They have no hope and they have no self-worth.

That happened to Ashley, this 9-year-old girl. She was trafficked on the streets of Washington, D.C., and online for 5 years. At 16, a peace officer here in Washington, D.C., arrested her for prostitution. She was brought before a judge, and the judge recognized that she was not a criminal, she was not guilty of prostitution. Children cannot commit the crime of prostitution. He recognized her plight and he ordered her into a treatment program to help her recover from being a trafficking victim. It is my opinion that that judge saved Ashley's life.

As was mentioned here on the House floor by Congresswoman BASS, the average age of a trafficking victim here in the United States of America is between 12 and 13. That means some girls are younger, like Ashley. She was 9. What a statistic. And, yes, it is mostly young minor females. Boys are trafficked. Adult females are trafficked as well, but the scourge is the biggest when it is our children.

Like the laws of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, they have increased judge and prosecutor training, giving them tools to deal with the scourge of human trafficking. It is nothing more than modern sex slavery. That is what human trafficking is.

Congresswoman WAGNER's Put Trafficking Victims First Act continues to improve the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act and improve the process by encouraging more training and a focus on victim-centered approaches in the courtroom. I was a judge for 22 years in Houston. We had none of this legislation to help rescue and restore victims of trafficking, and now we do.

We should remember that in our country we treat trafficking victims, like Ashley, like victims and make survivors out of them. Gone are the days that we are going to treat them like criminals. They are not criminals. They are victims of crime. We must stop the sale of children on the marketplace of sex slavery. This legislation helps do that. Victims like Ashley deserve treatment and care, and I support the work that has been done in the Put Trafficking Victims First Act, and I support the fact that it will help victims.

As co-chair of the Victims' Rights Caucus, along with the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA), we understand the importance of victims and we understand the importance of this legislation. No more, Mr. Speaker. Not in our city, not in our States, and not in our country.

And that is just the way it is.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

What an appropriate time so that I can add my appreciation to the chairman and the ranking member, Mr. CONYERS, the ranking member of the subcommittee that I am on, and to the chairman of the subcommittee. We have enjoyed working together on this legislation. To the cosponsors of this legislation, Mrs. WAGNER and Ms. BASS. And then to the potent statement of my friend and fellow Texan, Congressman TED POE, who modestly indicated that we, as women, helped drive this, frankly, he beat us to the finish line riding his horse, but I want to thank him very much for his great leadership and interest in this very important area.

□ 1745

This bill is a wonderful complement to the igniting of understanding about the vileness of human trafficking.

I think it is important to take note that the Homeland Security Department has trained airline stewards to recognize human trafficking victims on airplanes. Many of them are children, camouflaged as an adult and their special child—niece or nephew—traveling together.

This legislation is all about pointing out, finding, saving the victims, making sure they get treatment, and making sure that human trafficking is identified.

So I am also pleased that this measure, as amended, requires a report on State safe harbor laws. As we all know, safe harbors play a critical role in preventing youth, forced into the sex trade, from being revictimized again and stigmatized a second time by the criminal justice system, almost similar to the little girl who was looking for love. Instead, she got victimized and turned into a human trafficking product.

H.R. 2473 also fosters better collaboration among the Federal, State, and local law enforcement in the fight against sex trafficking and encourages States to adopt protections for trafficking victims by providing rehabilitation and recovery services for victims of human trafficking.

Accordingly, I urge my colleagues to support this measure and, as well, to be reminded of all those children who will be helped and saved.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this fine legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2473, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to direct the Attorney General to study issues relating to human trafficking, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HONORING MICHAEL WELGE

(Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and memory of a lifelong resident of my hometown of Taylorville, Illinois, my good friend, Michael Welge. Mike was a veteran, public servant, devoted husband to his wife, Judy, father, grandfather, and, again, my friend.

Mike passed away on May 4, but he left a long legacy of dedication to his family, his country, and his community. As an Army veteran who served his country, Mike continued his service to military members as the commander of American Legion Post 73.

Mike worked at Peabody Mine No. 10 for years before beginning a 22-year career at the Illinois Department of Corrections. Mike served as a member of the Taylorville Planning and Zoning Committee for 25 years and was a member of many groups like the Taylorville FFA Association, the American Farm Heritage Museum in Greenville, ABATE, and Moose Lodge 1516.

Mike is survived by his wife, Judy, son, grandson, and brother. He will be truly missed by all who knew him, and I consider myself blessed to have known Mike Welge as a friend.

PRESIDENT TRUMP'S BUDGET PROPOSAL

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, budgets are about values. And President Trump's budget breaks his promises to the American people. His 2018 budget is a disgrace.

The plan cuts people's access to basic necessities and retards decent standards of living. The American people want to create jobs, raise wages, invest in education, protect their pensions, and give people a chance at a better future.

What does the Trump budget do for the heartland that voted for him? Great Lakes clean up? Zeroed out. Social Security Disability insurance? Slashed. Medicaid? Slashed. Public education? Slashed.

We have seen this supply side economic shell game before. It ends with a massive tax cut for millionaires and billionaires, while leaving Americans living on the brink paycheck to paycheck, leaving them behind.

Let's recap. The Trump budget hurts working families, it weakens Social Security and Medicaid, it hurts students seeking to better themselves, it hurts seniors trying to pay for their medicine and insurance and who depend on programs like Meals on Wheels.

I would encourage every heartland family with an elderly parent, an indebted graduate, or a trusting toddler to look at this budget and match it against the promises they heard versus what is being delivered. What a shame for our country.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

(Ms. TENNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. TENNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of millions of people worldwide, whose lives have been irreparably harmed by the scourge of human trafficking.

Tragically, human trafficking is a $32 billion industry. This horrific practice is often difficult to detect, yet there are nearly 21 million victims of human trafficking throughout the world each year. It is estimated that 55 percent of these victims are women and young girls.

Sadly, most incidents of human trafficking go unreported, while the victims suffer in silent pain. It is for these reasons that we must raise awareness of this terrible practice and work to combat the growing threat against these vulnerable people.

As a member of the State assembly, I championed bipartisan measures to combat this modern-day form of slavery, including the Trafficking Victims Protection and Justice Act.

Yesterday, to continue this fight, I worked alongside my colleagues in the House to pass bipartisan measures to eliminate the scourge on humanity at the Federal level, and also today.

Millions of men, women, and children are suffering at the hands of human traffickers and sex abusers. Thus, it is our duty to hold those who commit these vile acts accountable and to ensure justice for all.

MEMORIAL DAY

(Mr. POE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, this Monday, America honors its war dead. We call it Memorial Day.

Many Americans do not realize that there are 25 United States cemeteries overseas for America's war dead. The one in Luxembourg is one that I have visited and I find quite unique.

During World War II, in 1944, the Germans crushed through the American lines in a surprise attack. It was called the Battle of the Bulge. My 92-year-old father fought in that battle when he was 18.

The German advance was eventually halted. One reason was because General George Patton and his army helped halt the attack by quickly advancing through and saving Luxembourg.

After the war, the nation of Luxembourg agreed to a memorial there. The memorial is unique because the cemetery is a burial place for mostly Americans who were killed in the Battle of the Bulge. There are 5,076 Americans buried there—22 sets of brothers. And the average age of the soldier buried in Luxembourg is 19.

This Memorial Day, let us remember all who have served and have given their lives and are buried all over the world, because, Mr. Speaker, the worst casualty of war is to be forgotten.

And that is just the way it is.

REDUCING IMPACT ON DISEASE CONTROL

(Mr. LAMALFA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 953, the Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act, which eliminates the need to apply for additional permits for using pesticides already approved for widespread use under current law.

The permitting process places an unnecessary compliance burden on farmers who simply want to protect their crops using already available pesticides that have been determined to have minimal or no environmental impact in their original testing process.

But of greater concern is the impact on disease control. This bureaucratic red tape can have the severe unintended consequence of raising the difficulty for local mosquito control districts, and others, and increase the likelihood that mosquito-transmitted diseases can spread.

The Zika virus, which reached epidemic levels last year, remains a serious threat in the United States, with 119 cases still in place and over 400 cases in U.S. territories. We are not out of the woods yet.

This duplicative process hamstrings health officials and agencies who are responsible for suppressing these viruses and maintaining public safety.

This legislation provides critical protections of our Nation's food supply, as well as increasing our ability to combat public health crises, such as the Zika virus.

H.R. 953 passed the House last year with bipartisan support, and I encourage my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to do so once again.

RECOGNIZING BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SESSIONS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the topic of this Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, tonight, Members of Congress who are Eagle Scouts are taking to the floor of the House of Representatives to say thank you not only to the Boy Scouts of America but to recognize and to highlight our opportunity while in Boy Scouts, and now, as Members of Congress, to talk about how important the Boy Scouts of America is to the youth, the young men and young women of this country, and, also, to highlight the leadership that takes place every single day in this country: men and women who volunteer their time to make sure that the Boy Scouts of America are prepared and ready to meet not only the times that we live in but the advances of young people and the challenges that they have.

Tonight, as an Eagle Scout of the Eagle class of 1970, it is my opportunity to introduce Members of Congress and then to follow up at the end as we talk about how important Scouting is.

Today, there are 1,262,311 boys in Scouting from ages 6 to 10 in Cub Scouts. There are 822,999 boys aged 11 to 17 in Boy Scouts of America and Varsity Scouts. There are 119,268 young men and young women between the ages of 10 to 20 who are engaged in exploring based upon programs that may be STEM or other Scouting programs.

As you see, Mr. Speaker, the Boy Scouts of America is important to the youth of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. COLLINS), who is the head of our Scouting Caucus, and the Eagle class of 1963.

Mr. COLLINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I thank Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS for yielding. I am very honored to be standing with him today as the co-chair of the Scouting Caucus, along with Eagle Scout JIM COOPER from Tennessee.

There are, in fact, 33 Eagle Scouts—23 from the House of Representatives and 10 from the Senate—currently serving in the United States Congress. But just as importantly, there are 150 Members of Congress who experienced Scouting, whether as a youth, and, perhaps, in the case of 33 progressing to the rank of Eagle Scout, or, currently as myself does, serving as an adult Scout leader.

Scouting was important to many of us growing up. I think when a lot of us look back on our lives and say what was one of the larger impacts we had, I can tell you, in my case, it was Scouting.

And the same is true for my 24-year-old Eagle Scout son. I can't tell you how many different camping trips my son and I enjoyed together—what a great bonding experience for a father and a son coming right up through Cub Scouts.

So for all of those Scouts today, as Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS indicated, who are currently involved in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts and Explorers, Scouting is changing their lives, and it is changing their lives for the better.

We have all heard the 12 points of the Scout law. That is a compass for the youth of America today, when they are faced with tough decisions, to look at those 12 points and remind themselves that a Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent. Those 12 points of the Scout law are a compass for them to live their life and make the right decisions.

□ 1800

Many cases I referred to the first three words of the Scout Oath, and we can't talk about them enough, those first three words, ''on my honor.'' That is so important today for our youth to have a compass, to understand what honor is, and Scouting introduces them to that.

But I will also tell you what Scouting is. It is young men, young boys having fun outdoors. Some say today the problem with youth in America is they have and they suffer from nature deficit disorder: They don't get outside enough; they don't know how to play outdoors; they are stuck with their electronic devices.

Well, Scouting gets the youth of America outside. It is healthy. They get to enjoy themselves, learn all kinds of skills, but just the friendships that they get within Scouting that, over a lifetime, will help them as they become the future leaders of America.

There are a disproportionate number of leaders in America today who were Scouts and, in fact, Eagle Scouts. Today, in President Trump's Cabinet, we are honored as a country to have four Eagle Scouts: Eagle Scout Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State; Eagle Scout Rick Perry, Secretary of Energy; Eagle Scout Jeff Sessions, our current Attorney General; and Eagle Scout, Ryan Zinke, our Secretary of the Interior.

I will tell you, in most of their cases, they would identify Scouting as a major part of them growing up and, maybe they didn't know it at the time, but giving them the life skills that have served them to the point today they are serving our Nation.

We have 27 Members in the bipartisan Scouting Caucus; many, but not all, are Eagle Scouts. I think all of us are proud to talk about our past as an Eagle Scout, but we also remind people, to this day, we are Eagle Scouts.

Once a year, our Chief Scout Executive, Mike Surbaugh, comes to Washington, D.C., to present a report on the status of Scouting in the Nation today. We have a great reception for our Chief Scout Executive once a year to welcome him and Scouts from around the country as they present to us the status of Scouting in America today.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the last four presidents of the Boy Scouts of America. Our current president, Randall Stephenson, is the current CEO of AT&T. He followed Bob Gates, who was our Secretary of Defense; Wayne Perry, the vice chairman of AT&T; and our own Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, when he was CEO of Exxon, was the president of the Boy Scouts of America.

So I think all of us today understand the importance of Scouting in our lives and, in many cases, just reflect back on the fun that we had as young kids and young adults.

Once every 4 years, all the Scouts in America gather, with some from around the world as well, at our national Scout jamboree. We currently have a permanent Scout High Adventure site in West Virginia at the Summit.

Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS and I, as well as others, 4 years ago, went to the Summit. And you know what? We just had fun. We went down the zip line. We went on some of the other obstacle courses. Even as adults, it was reliving our youth. And we intend to go back later in July for, every 4 years, as I said, they have the national Scout jamboree. Somewhere in the neighborhood of 40,000 Scouts from around the United States will gather for approximately 1 week and just have a lot of fun, get to meet others from around the country.

So that is what Scouting is. I can't think of a more healthy activity for young men to be involved in, and, I think, in many cases, certainly, the moms of this world understand the important values that their sons are getting, as well as the dads.

I can just tell you, I am happy to stay involved in Scouting. As the co-chair of the Eagle Scout Caucus, I am proud to remind people I am today an Eagle Scout. And we also have fun shaking hands with our left hand. That's how Scouts do it, the hand closest to our heart.

I was with our Secretary of State in Alaska a week ago and went to introduce myself. He put out his right hand to shake hands, as adults do, and I said: ''No, sir, Mr. Secretary. As one Eagle Scout to another, we are going to shake hands the right way, with our left hands.'' He got a big smile on his face because he knew exactly what I was talking about.

So Eagle Scout PETE SESSIONS, I want to thank you for giving me the

opportunity to talk a little bit about Scouting today in our Congress. Thank you for your leadership in our Special Order tonight, and I look forward to hearing from our other Members of Congress, fellow Eagle Scouts. I know it impacted their life.

Thank you again for your leadership tonight.

Mr. SESSIONS. Eagle Scout CHRIS COLLINS, thank you very much.

By the way, one of those presidents of the Boy Scouts of America was Ed Whitacre. When I was at AT&T, Mr. Whitacre led the Boy Scouts of America, understanding how important it is.

Ladies and gentlemen, the gentleman from Texas, the chairman of the House Financial Services Committee, the gentleman from Dallas, Texas, is also an Eagle Scout. JEB HENSARLING not only is a bright, young, thoughtful, articulate leader in the United States Congress, he is Eagle Class of 1971.

Chairman HENSARLING, as an Eagle Scout, not only distinguished himself to Scouting, but also, that led him to Texas A&M University and then, further, to the University of Texas Law School. He is a young man who not only deeply believes in his country and his God, but he believes in the things that have brought him forward to become a leader in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas, Eagle Scout JEB HENSARLING.

Mr. HENSARLING. Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank the gentleman for yielding.

I have had many opportunities in my career to come to this House floor and speak about topics of great importance, but few are as near and dear to my heart as is Scouting.

So, one, I want to thank the gentleman from New York for his leadership and the gentleman from Texas for his leadership and keeping Scouting alive not only in their hearts, but in the heart of the House and in the hearts of so many young men in America today.

Mr. Speaker, as I think about my own life, I think how terribly blessed I have been. I think about the molders of my character, and, certainly, I thank the Lord for the blessing of being able to worship Him in the land of the free. And I think about the impact my church has had upon my life.

I think how blessed I am to have parents like Charles and Ann Hensarling, who raised me in College Station, Texas, and how proud I am to be my mother's son and how proud I was to be my late father's son. But I also think about what Scouting meant as a molder of my character.

Mr. Speaker, that is not what originally drew me to Scouting. I was originally drawn to the fun of it, to the high adventure, to the camping trips, to those Capture the Flag games that went on to the wee hours of the morning. Little did I know how long one could actually hunt for a snipe back in the early days of my Scouting career. And so I was drawn to Indian lore and canoeing and camping, and that was so exciting to me.

So when I think about my Scouting career, Mr. Speaker, I think about, you know, the fun I had. I think about the friendships. There are people I haven't seen for decades, but, you know, I think about a friend by the name of Dennis Gary, whom I haven't seen in decades. But if I saw him tomorrow, I would know him because I would know him through his heart, because we experienced Scouting together, and so many others.

I think about the many practical things I learned in my Scouting career. I hope I never fall into a hole and break an arm, but if I did, even today at my ripe old age, I could still tie a one-handed bowline. I still know how to do that.

I hope I am never lost in the forest for days on end, but, you know, Mr. Speaker, I know that, as distasteful as it would be, I could survive off of cattail root and dandelion leaves because that is what Scouting taught me.

So Scouting is about fun; it is about friendship; but it was about practical things that I learned. Mr. Speaker, there is even a far more important aspect to Scouting, and that is values, the values that we learned.

So even today, as a Member of Congress, I know how important it is to be prepared, to be prepared before I come to this House floor and try to convince fellow Members of this august body on actions that we should take in the life of a great nation.

As we deal with so many issues about the lives of a great nation, I also remember, for example, somebody who wasn't in the Boy Scouts—my wife. I know back in Dallas, Texas, almost every week of her life she is driving some indigent cancer patient to their treatments.

I reflected that, although as Members of Congress we deal with matters of great importance that impact millions and millions of people, I have got to tell you, my wife, back in Dallas, Texas, does a good turn daily. It reminds me that I learned in Scouting how important it is to help one human life at a time and to do a good turn daily.

When I look upon my colleagues here in Congress today, I think about a certain colleague, and I am not going to mention his name, but a colleague who at one time wasn't quite keeping up with his diet. He wasn't quite keeping up with his exercise. Although he had young children, he had a heart attack, and we almost lost this colleague, but he came back. It is a reminder how important it is to keep ourselves physically strong for our children, for our parents, for our colleagues, and for our friends. That is something I learned in Scouting, Mr. Speaker.

I think about another friend whose wife almost was lost when she was diagnosed with a very serious form of cancer, stage IV. But there was an oncologist here in this area, in the Washington area, who was on the cutting edge of cancer research that saved her life, and she was—the percentages against her, there was a 99 percent chance she wouldn't make it, but she did because somebody decided to be mentally awake. That is something else I learned in Scouting, Mr. Speaker, how important it is to be mentally awake.

And one day, when I leave this institution, some of the finest people I have ever met in life I know will have served in the United States of House of Representatives, but, unfortunately, a couple of them represent the worst. A couple of them have turned in their pin stripes for prison stripes because somehow they lost their way.

In Scouting, we are taught to orient a map with a physical compass, but we are also taught to orient the map of life with a moral compass. So I learned in Scouting how important it was to be morally straight, to have that internal compass to guide us at all times.

So I will admit, I am not proud of the fact, Mr. Speaker, but you know what? The words, over the years, occasionally they are a little rusty to me. I don't quite recite them as I once did. I don't always recite the words: ''On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to my God and my country, to obey the Scout Law, to help others at all times, to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.''

So, yes, Mr. Speaker, occasionally the words are a little rusty, but the principles are as alive to me today as they were almost half a century ago when I first entered Scouting and followed that career all the way up to Eagle Scout, something I am so, so very proud of today.

So, Mr. Speaker, I hope anybody who is watching the proceedings at this time will, again, understand how valuable Scouting is to all of us. It is not just important to my own personal life. It is important to the life of a great nation.

Our first President, the Father of our Country, said that you cannot have a free society which is not a moral society. Scouting helps make certain we have a moral society.

□ 1815

So I think of the fun, I think of the friendship, I think of the lessons, but, most importantly, I think about that moral compass for the map of life that has guided me and, with Scouting to come in the future, will guide the life of this great Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Dallas for his leadership, I thank him for his friendship, I thank him for all he means for Scouting, and I thank him for yielding to me.

Mr. SESSIONS. Chairman HENSARLING, Eagle Scout, class of 1971, thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I hold a Scoutbook, something I call the second good book. Of course, we know in Scouting, the

good book is the Bible; but to Scouters, also the second good book is the Boy Scout Handbook. This was given to me in 2010 by Bob Mazzuca, who is our chief Scout executive, and he gave it to me with really a guide to my life to continue down that pathway of talking about Scouting in great ways. And that is what we are doing tonight.

I acknowledge that we not only have JOHN GARAMENDI, who is an Eagle Scout, class of 1960, who will be speaking in a bit, but on a bipartisan basis, this body has young people, young men who understood why they got into Scouting. They understood about their life. They certainly understand it now.

At this time I would like to bring forth Eagle Scout FRENCH HILL, 1972, from Arkansas, a relatively new Member of Congress, not only a mature man, but a man who comes with the proxy of knowledge of what Boy Scouting has helped provide him.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. HILL), an Eagle Scout.

Mr. HILL. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman SESSIONS for holding this Special Order. It means, I think, a lot not only to the Scouts that are here in the House of Representatives and the Senate to recognize the importance of Scouting to our country, but to all the mothers, fathers, and Scouts that are seeing this proceeding on C–SPAN or will hear about it to realize that they are participating in something that is very special.

I mean, I think of Scouting, really, Mr. Speaker, as a gift to the country for all of the reasons that the previous speakers have noted. I can't think about Scouting without thinking about what it has meant to me, Chairman SESSIONS, and influencing on my young life. Role models is the first thing that comes to mind with Scouting.

I think about my dad—who was not an Eagle Scout. He was a Sea Scout—and he ended up being basically a Life Scout for life, as people say in Scouting. But nobody was more influential to me in my youth than my dad—currently 91 years old—a Scout still at heart, and all the experiences we had together, how we bonded as father and son, and how, when I went off to college, Mr. Speaker, he continued to be a role model and adult leader for young men for years to come.

That is the kind of person that is in every one of our communities all over this country, helping mold our young people through the Scouting program.

Mr. Speaker, Scouting was my first paid job. I worked at a Scout camp. I earned, I believe, something like $10 a week, plus room and board, of course. It is when I first learned who FICA was because, at $10 a week, I wanted to know who took this $2 out of my $10 check. So I learned my first lesson about Federal economic policy and who FICA was as a Boy Scout working at the end of a very dusty parking lot for 7 weeks in the hot summer of Arkansas, teaching, pioneering, cooking, and camping merit badges.

But I think of other adults besides my dad. I think about Angelo Coppola and Fred Bean, both constituents of mine now that I serve in the people's House who were camp directors at that camp where I was a very happy employee and Scout for those summers in the early 1970s.

So Scouting is about role models. Scouting is about character building, and that starts that relationship, I think, between our moms and our dads that are involved in the Scouting program, and what we give to kids today. And, boy, do we need that character development.

The Boy Scouts of America was formed in 1910 and was inspired by British war hero Robert S.S. Baden-Powell of the Scouting program started back in the U.K. A lot of people today who are involved in Scouting, even at this moment, Mr. Speaker, don't know that the U.S. Congress presented a law to Woodrow Wilson, who signed it in 1916, chartering the Boy Scouts of America.

We are chartered by the United States Congress, and what a special feeling it is for all of us who are Scouts in Congress today to recognize that something that was so important to our youth was, in fact, chartered by the body that we serve in today.

In the early 20th century, Baden-Powell was thinking about how to expand army youth training with a place for all boys to dedicate their efforts to peace, not war, and he wanted Scouting to improve boys' lives by building their character, physical fitness, and outdoor skills.

He put a premium on bringing boys together from all walks of life, mixing boys from the elite prep schools and boarding schools with those in working class homes. And we do that today, Mr. Speaker. We bring boys from all backgrounds into the character-building exercises of Scouting.

Mr. COLLINS, a few minutes ago, talked about the importance of outdoor recreation, and that was certainly what brought me in. My interest in Scouting was outdoor recreation. When you think about it, in 1910, people were moving off the farm. People were urbanizing. We were passing laws on child labor. We were trying to make sure our boys coming off the farm away from home would have a good set of role models. So Scouting was so important to that urban youth that they get character and that outdoor experience.

And while that was a big deal back in 1910, I would argue, as CHRIS COLLINS did today, that it is a big deal now. He talked about a nature deficit. There is no doubt that we have that today, just as we did in some people's views back in 1910.

In 2005, Leonard Sax wrote a seminal book that I urge not only all of our Members to read, but people watching these proceedings to read, ''Boys Adrift,'' where he argued that the lack of experiential learning and free playtime—particularly outdoors—in our childhood is diminishing our effectiveness in learning as managers and our interpersonal relationships.

In 2008, Richard Louv wrote a book called ''Last Child in the Woods,'' where he argued that unstructured outdoor playtime is critical to childhood development.

Well, that is exactly what Scouting does. It provides outdoor recreation, something I think is essential to childhood development; something that we have lost because of not only urbanization, but our changing behavior.

One recent nature conservancy poll found that only 10 percent of American teens spend time outside every day. I can't imagine on a day where the sun was shinning when I was a teenager that I ever spent any time indoors. My parents were always on the hunt: Where is he? He is outside somewhere.

According to research by the Harvard School of Public Health, American adults spend less time outdoors than they do inside vehicles; less than 5 percent of their day.

So I think the scientific research says our boys and our girls need outdoor recreation. They need experiential learning. This is what is the core of the Scouting program. Like air and water, our wild places, our National Parks are essential to the education of our children and have greatly benefited the Boy Scouts and the Scouting experience. I can't imagine what my life would be like without that Scouting experience in terms of my love of the outdoors.

The second thing that attracted me to Scouting was the leadership opportunities. Baden-Powell said he wanted to be boy-driven. And here, 101 years after President Wilson signed the Boy Scouts of America into law, Scouting prides itself, Mr. Speaker, on being boy-driven, kid-driven. That is how we teach responsibility, character, and leadership.

I like this famous list, Mr. SESSIONS, that we use at so many Eagle Scout ceremonies called ''100 Scouts.''

Mr. Speaker, of 100 Scouts, people who participate in Scouting:

Thirty will drop out their first year, but they will remember the program fondly.

Twelve will be from a family that has no religious organization or religious membership, and many will begin their first contact with the need to be morally straight and have, at their heart, a belief in God; 12 will be touched by the Scouting program.

Five will go on to earn their religious award from whatever faith tradition they have.

One will use their Scouting skills to save a life.

One will credit Scouting skills for saving their own life.

Eighteen will develop a lifelong hobby.

Eight will find their vocation through the exploration of the merit badge work they did as a Scout.

Seventeen will later become Scout leaders, like all of our Members here on this floor tonight.

Four will become an Eagle Scout.

Four out of that 100, Mr. Speaker, will earn the rank of Eagle Scout, and at least one will say they value earning that Eagle award more than their college degree.

When it comes to the role that Scouting plays, it is something that I am so proud of because I have a Scout in Troop 30 in St. Paul's Methodist Church in Little Rock, and I am so proud of the work that he has done on that trail toward Eagle. He is in the middle of planning his project now to combine his love of golf and Scouting. It is a service project at The First Tee of Central Arkansas in Little Rock, and I reflect it on the value of these Eagle projects across our communities in all 50 of our States and around the world.

Just in America, using 2014 data, about 150—140 people earn their Eagle rank a day in the United States. And in 2014, they spent 8.1 million hours, Mr. Speaker, on their Eagle Scout project, benefiting our towns, our communities, all over this country.

In the nonprofit world, if you applied a typical pay rate to that, a project rate that the independent sector uses of about $23 an hour, that is $188 million in public service value our Eagle Scouts have contributed across this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell Mr. SESSIONS how much I appreciate his taking time to highlight Scouting, and the value of Scouting to our town and our communities, but, more importantly, to our families at creating that sense of character that we have talked about tonight.

I am one of those people that values my Eagle Scout award, dating back to 1972, from Troop 27, at Our Lady of the Holy Souls Catholic Church in Little Rock. And I am so proud that this many years later I still have the ability to support my son who is on that Eagle trail, and have the support of my dad that many long years after 1972 and my Eagle award because, in our family, we believe in a good turn daily. We believe in the Scout law. We believe in the Scout oath. And if there is one thing you need to do to survive in Congress, you have got to be prepared.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate Mr. SESSIONS for the opportunity to share these comments in support of Scouting. I thank the gentleman for his service to the National Eagle Scout Association and his long service to Circle Ten Council in Dallas, Texas.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, Eagle Scout Congressman FRENCH HILL, Eagle class of '72, thank you very much.

It is with great distinction now that I recognize Congressman Eagle Scout JIM BRIDENSTINE, 1991. It was about a week ago that Eagle Scout Bridenstine came up to me and said: Pete, I want you to know that my son is involved in Scouting, and I deeply believe in it, but I think we ought to get together here.

So it actually is Eagle Scout JIM BRIDENSTINE who said: Let's get together our Eagle Scouts and talk about it.

And I hope that the gentleman will have a chance to come on July 24 or so, as Eagle Scout Members of Congress, along with Senator MIKE ENZI, and perhaps others—my Down syndrome son, Eagle Scout Alexander Gregory Sessions, Troop 890, Lake Highlands, Texas, will join me—that you, too, with your son, may be able to go with us to the reserve and do that.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. BRIDENSTINE), a distinguished Eagle Scout.

□ 1830

Mr. BRIDENSTINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman Eagle Scout Chairman PETE SESSIONS for his great introduction. It is an absolute honor to be here.

About a week ago, I said I would like to get the Eagle Scouts together on the floor of the House of Representatives and talk about what it means to us to be Eagle Scouts, reflect on our history and our tradition and how great this institution has been for the United States of America for all of these years and how we must make sure that this institution stays strong for the years to come. When I brought that to the gentleman's attention, he said, absolutely, we will do it. I didn't talk to him again, and today we are doing it. I didn't have to ask twice.

As chairman of the Scouting Caucus here in the House of Representatives, the gentleman has led in a tremendous way. We have seen so many Eagle Scouts come to the Capitol, and he always gets all of us together and always has us talk face-to-face with the Scouts—not just Eagle Scouts—and encourage them from the earliest days of their Scouting careers.

I want to thank him for his leadership, because a lot of people could chair this committee, but he hasn't just chaired it; he has led it, and that reflects greatly on him.

When I think about my days as a Scout, I go all the way back to my Cub Scout days. In fact, it was even before I was a Scout. My brother was a year older than me, so he got to be a Cub Scout before I was a Cub Scout.

He got to participate in this new thing that was going on in the lives of the Bridenstines called the pinewood derby. He had this little car—a block of wood with some nails and some wheels—and we watched that car streak from the very top of the track and come to a screeching halt where the track leveled out. In fact, this little blue car didn't even make it to the end of the track.

Of course, all of these other Scouts had all their fancy cars that had their rounded wheels and graphite on the nails and all of the weights put in the car. We didn't know to do any of that.

So my brother, John Bridenstine, who was a Cub Scout before I was a Cub Scout, had to endure the pain of being a Scout and wanting to have the fastest car, and his didn't even make it to the end of the track.

Well, I will tell you this. There was a Life Scout named Wayne Bridenstine, who was our dad. He was not going to allow any of our cars to ever again not make it to the end of the track. So we went to work trying to learn everything we could about this pinewood derby.

We engineered a couple of what I think are the greatest cars in American Scouting history. The next year, the Bridenstine boys won first place and second place going forward. We won first place and second place in—I don't remember which—but we reversed it going backwards. So we went from having a car that didn't even reach the end of the track to winning the pinewood derby.

Many years later, now I have my own son. He is in Cub Scouts and he does the pinewood derby. I committed to him the same thing my dad committed to us back in those days: We are going to win the pinewood derby.

The first year we did it, we had great success. The second year, Dad got a little, maybe, overaggressive in his engineering. Maybe we put the weights a little too far back. As that car came down, it got really unstable and it wobbled. There were a couple of times it barely made it to the end of the track.

But I will tell you this. The relationship that I had with my dad and that my brother had with our dad and that was necessary to pull us from not even finishing the race to winning the race and now the relationship with my son, Walker Bridenstine, are things that are important in our family and will be for many years to come.

So those are some of my first ideas.

Of course, Cub Scouts led to the Arrow of Light. The very next progression is to become a Boy Scout. So we searched a number of different troops across Arlington, Texas, and Fort Worth, Texas. We were in the Longhorn Council at the time. We eventually settled on Troop 83.

I remember some of the leaders of the troop. Coach Wasden was a football coach at Hutcheson Junior High. That was somebody who was intense. He was serious about Scouts. Boy, if you were going to move up in rank, you were going to prove to him that you have done what was required.

Of course, earning merit badges was important to all of us who were trying to move up the ranks. I will never forget the first summer camp that we went on. My brother and I were not able to go to the summer camp that our troop went on. So we went to this thing called the Maverick Camp, where we went with a bunch of Scouts we didn't even know, but we had a great time.

I am not going to lie to you; it was a challenge. I was in fifth grade. My brother was in sixth grade. It was the middle of August in Texas. We will just say the middle of August in Texas. It was just as hot at midnight as it was at the noon hour.

We sweat a lot. We worked hard. We got seven merit badges that summer. That was intense. We didn't know you weren't supposed to get that many. We showed up back at our troop for the court of honor and people were shocked that we got seven. No wonder it was so hard. Nobody told us not to get seven merit badges in one summer camp.

These are some of the memories I had. My brother and I were really challenged and we got that done. The next summer, we did three or four merit badges and had a lot more fun. These are some of the memories.

I was the chaplain's aid. As the chaplain's aid, one of the things that I prayed for most was that the chaplain would show up on the campout so I wouldn't have to do the public speaking in front of everybody. And here I am now as a Member of Congress who publicly speaks as a living. That is one of the things the Boy Scouts of America gave me: the ability to stand before an audience and tell people what was on my mind.

My leadership experience was as the chaplain's aid. My brother was the senior patrol leader for Troop 83. I was in the Arrow of Light patrol. He was in the Bison Patrol. He was the senior patrol leader.

Summer camp after summer camp and all the things we heard, here is, I think, one of the important things that people need to remember: The Boy Scouts of America is an institution that trains leaders. You might not recognize it when you are in it because you believe you are just having fun, but then there come those moments in life when you really need to lean on the things that you learned as a Boy Scout, and it doesn't even dawn on you until later that you actually learned these things as a Boy Scout.

After I graduated from college, I joined the United States Navy. I became a pilot. Of course, one of the things we have to do is survival, evasion, resistance, and escape. In this process, we have to live in the woods for a period of time. We have to figure out how we are going to survive and evade for a week. During this time, you have to live based on the things that you see around you. You have to be able to start a fire.

Some of these basic things I was able to do that all the peers around me had no ability to do because they did not have the life experiences in the Boy Scouts of America.

We had to be able to cook a rabbit, something that I had done before and something that my peers, also Navy pilots, had not done. We had to able to land navigate with a map and a compass, which, to me, was second nature because I had done it for years trying to get to my rank of Eagle. But for so many people, it was a foreign concept to use a map and a compass to land navigate from point A to point B.

I remember one group navigated point to point. Our group said: We don't want to go point to point because if we miss the point, we won't know we missed the point. So we are going to intentionally offset, hit the river, and then we are going to know exactly where we are. Of course, we didn't miss the point. We knew where we were going.

But some of my peers who did not have the experiences I had went well beyond the point and didn't know they had gone down the point, then they had to come back. I could have told you that was going to happen because it had happened to me previously as somebody who was in the Boy Scouts of America.

These are very real-life experiences that you look back on and say: Why was I able to do this? I was able to do it because I was in the Boy Scouts of America.

You also look back and say there are things that are intangible, things that are not specific. I heard Eagle Scout JEB HENSARLING today—chairman, Congressman, Eagle Scout—talk about tying a bowline in one hand and how he doesn't anticipate finding himself at the bottom of a cliff with a broken arm, but if he did, he would be able to tie a one-handed bowline and somebody would be able to pull him out. Certainly, that is exactly the same kind of thing that I learned when I was going through the same program.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Walker Bridenstine, my son, had to learn how to tie a bowline. I was trying to teach him how to tie a bowline the old-fashioned way. I simply couldn't do it. When I tried to tie it as a one-handed bowline, I was able to do it. It just stuck with me all of these years.

So, again, these are specific skills. But the leadership, the ability to lead people are things that the Boy Scouts teach you. You apply these things every day in your life, and you don't even know you are doing it.

I will also say that, as employers, we look for leaders when we are trying to find whom we are going to hire. We see over and over again employers looking to hire Eagle Scouts from the Boy Scouts of America.

So there might be somebody today who is watching this maybe on C–SPAN, maybe on the internet; and maybe you are a Boy Scout, maybe you are a Cub Scout, maybe you are not sure if you are going to stick it out. I will tell you this. Every interview I have ever gone on, I had a resume. On that resume was included the fact that I was an Eagle Scout. Even when I was applying for college, I put on my resume and in all of my extracurricular classes that I was an Eagle Scout. I would highly encourage anybody that is maybe at a lower rank but working hard to attain that Eagle, finish your Eagle Scout.

My dad was a Life Scout. He moved when he was a Life Scout. He never finished his Eagle. His brother, JIM BRIDENSTINE, my uncle, did finish his Eagle Scout. Of course, my brother and I both finished our Eagle Scout, and now our kids are in Scouts, and we are going to do everything we can to help them finish their Eagle Scout.

Not only did I put it on every resume, not only on all of my college applications, I will tell you, I also ran for Federal office. The first thing I did in my campaign commercials is tell people: My name is JIM BRIDENSTINE, and I am an Eagle Scout. Before I told them that I went to college or before I told them that I was a Navy pilot, I told them that I was an Eagle Scout.

I think it is important for people to understand that some folks have a desire from an early age to achieve. When employers look at a resume, when voters look at somebody running for office, they want to see that.

I will tell you, there was somebody who came into my office not too long ago wanting a job. I had a number of great candidates. It was nearly impossible for me to pick which one. We all know this: When you get to be a Member of Congress, you get hundreds of resumes the next day.

I was getting down to the end, and I was trying to figure out which one. I got down to three. When they left my office, one of the three said this: One other thing I need to let you know; I am an Eagle Scout.

That did it for me. I knew at that point that this young man had committed himself to something much bigger than himself from an early age. That person now works in my office.

I look for that. I know employers across this country look for that. It speaks volumes to the character and the training of the individual. That will continue.

I will tell you, when you think about all of the astronauts in the United States of America, the 316 or so of them in the history of the United States of America, 40 of them were Eagle Scouts. That is not by accident. I will tell you that is a much higher percentage than the number of Eagle Scouts who are produced in the Boy Scouts of America, and it is certainly a much higher percentage than the number of Eagle Scouts that exist in the population of the United States of America. So this is something that employers look for.

I took my 11-year-old son to the Air Force Academy just about a month ago. I took some brochures about what it takes to get into the Air Force Academy. There is all kinds of stuff in there about being an athlete and being a great student, but one of the six criteria that they look for is: Are you an Eagle Scout at the Air Force Academy of the United States of America?

I would also argue they probably look for the same thing at West Point and the Naval Academy. These are things that employers look for, that schools look for, that the military looks for. These are the character issues that are important.

So if you are in Scouting today, my encouragement to you is to finish, get your Eagle Scout. If you are below the

age of 18 and you have still got time, I would encourage you to join and get your Eagle Scout. It has been important for me. It has been important for my brother. It has been important for my family.

□ 1845

My uncle Jim's son, Shane, my cousin, is also an Eagle Scout. This is a tradition of the Bridenstine family, and I would encourage you to make it a tradition in yours.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to say thank you for your leadership and thank you for leading this effort.

Mr. SESSIONS. Eagle Scout JIM BRIDENSTINE, Member of Congress from Oklahoma, Eagle Class 1991, thank you very much.

The Scouting stories of leadership, of character, and of opportunity began in my life with my father, who was an Eagle Scout. His father, Dr. Will A. Sessions, in 1947 wrote the original God and Country Award Handbook. I wanted to be an Eagle Scout because of my dad. I have two young sons: William Steele Sessions II, who is an Eagle Scout, age 27; and Alexander Gregory Sessions, a Down syndrome young man, an Eagle Scout, who is 23. Scouting is in our blood, we believe it, but it is also in family blood. JIM BRIDENSTINE spoke about it, and CHRIS COLLINS spoke about the Eagle Class of '63.

This other next young man who is here will talk about Scouting and what a difference it makes. I wish we had hours, Mr. Speaker, but the rules allow 1 hour. He is a young man from Pennsylvania, Eagle Scout GLENN ''GT'' THOMPSON. I had an opportunity to go to Pennsylvania with the Chief Scout Executive and give GT THOMPSON his National and Distinguished Eagle Scout Award and pin him.

GLENN's wife is a Scouting widow. She is proud of her Eagle Scout sons, but she knows that the weekends are made for Scouting.

GT THOMPSON is a man who will be with me again at the Summit Bechtel Reserve this year for the Scouting Jamboree.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the distinguished gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I thank you so much for this opportunity. It is great to have a distinguished brother Eagle Scout like yourself.

Mr. Speaker, Scouting has been a part of my family—or I have been part of the Scouting family, actually, since I was 11 years old. When I was 11 years old, my mom and dad did an amazing thing; they did what today I would call a good turn. It was really an amazing turn. They actually opened their home up—and this was appropriate since we are talking about a lot of foster youth this week, kids that grew up in foster families. They opened our family up to a boy that was just 2 years older than I, Bob. Bob came as a foster brother, and he is still my brother today.

Bob has some special needs. Bob had been bouncing around foster care homes his whole life, but when he came to our house, he didn't bounce anymore. He stuck. Like I said, he became my brother and is my brother today.

My mom and dad made a promise to him. One of the positive things that happened to Bob in the home he had been living in prior to coming to our home was that he got involved in a Boy Scout Troop. That Boy Scout Troop experience did amazing things for Bob. It really did. It was life changing for him because it allowed Bob to have success experiences, to enjoy the outdoors, and to flourish with things that he really developed a passion for.

As an 11-year-old younger brother, I lucked out. When mom and dad took Bob back over a couple of valleys to the Scout Troop where he was associated with—there was no Scout Troop in my hometown at the time—I got to tag along. I was 11 years old, and I never looked back.

I have been involved in Scouting since I have been 11 years old. I went on to achieve and earn my Eagle Scout Award. I have served as a Chapter Chief and a Juniata Lodge Chief in the Monocan Lodge in the Juniata Valley Council with the Order of the Arrow. I went on to be a Scout Master for 30 years.

One of the hardest parts about coming to Congress was the fact that I wasn't going to be home to be able to work with those youth leaders who were leading the troop for Scout meetings, campouts, and events on the weekend. That was the hardest part about taking this job because I had been a Scout Master for almost 30 years. I had trained Scout Masters, I was a course director, and I had served my council as a council president.

I am still involved with Scouting. I was back at my old stomping ground at the Seven Mountains Scout Camp in Spring Mills, Pennsylvania, on Sunday for an Eagle Scout court of honor. Here is the cool part of that: at that site over 70 years ago, my father-in-law received his Eagle Scout Award. Now, I am not saying it should be a prerequisite for picking out a wife that her dad is an Eagle Scout, but it worked out okay for me. It wasn't a bad thing.

So Scouting has been a big part of our family. My wife, Penny, has been a Cub Scout leader and a committee member, and, yes, a Scouting widow when our three sons and I, at different times, would pack up and go off to camp and High Adventure. Sometimes she would come along, actually. A lot of times she was left at home. Unfortunately, she was there to accept all the dirty laundry at the end of the weekend or the week, but she is just as much a Scouting leader. When I think about a great Scouting leader, my wife, Penny, comes to mind with what she has done.

I enjoy the opportunities to go out to Eagle Scout courts of honor. It really is a great opportunity to reconnect and to be a part of Scouting. I enjoy going to Girl Scout Gold Awards as well. So when I go there, normally I will look at the new Eagle Scout. I will talk about how we are there to celebrate all the merit badges they have earned, the citizenship that has been reflected in their actions, the character that we have seen, and the service that they have provided that now entitles them to be able to have that red, white, and blue piece of ribbon with a piece of metal in the shape of an eagle hang from their chest.

I also tell them they are ready for one last test question. I will look them in the eye and say: It has been over 100 years since Scouting came to these shores from England, where Scouting was first originated. So the question I give them is: Over 100 years, how many Eagle Scout Awards have been given away?

These kids are really smart. Somehow they are trying to do the math in their head. I stop them, and I say: Whoa. Stop. This is a trick question. The answer is zero. They have all been earned. None of them has ever been given away.

I talk about how now, as new Eagle Scouts, they have this tool chest that they carry with them. They don't carry it physically in their hands; they carry it in here. And it really is the principles of Scouting, because we stop and we start our meetings, we start our meetings, we end our meetings, we do our campouts and our Scouts' own worship services. We are always using and repeating the 12 points of the Scout law and three parts of the Scout promise. We do that because we want these boys who start out as young boys and become men to have muscle memory.

Muscle memory is not just on the good days where it is easy things, where things are going well and we are all celebrating and high-fiving each other and life is good, but on the bad days. Bad days do come. Life will be hard at times. We want them, especially in those times, to be able to rely on that muscle memory of those principles of Scouting.

I talk about how in this Chamber we are here voting. The chairman knows this. There are 435 of us. It is kind of interesting if you watch how people make up their mind to vote. It is pretty diverse sometimes. But for people like myself—I will take the liberty. I know this man well. This gentleman right here, Mr. SESSIONS, is an Eagle Scout. I fall back on the principles of Scouting.

I ask myself four questions when it comes time to vote. The first question is: In the decision I am about to make, what is my duty to God? Is the decision righteous according to God's Word and my faith?

Now, I said there are four questions. But if the answer is ''no'' on the first one, I don't go on to two, three, and four. I stop right there. If the answer is ''yes,'' then the next question is: In the

decision I am about to make, what is my duty to country? What does the Constitution have to say about this decision that is before us?

The third question I ask is: In the decision I am about to make, what is my duty to others?

Now, that one is a little harder because that is like: How does this impact more than 730,000 citizens that I have the privilege and honor to represent—16 counties, 24 percent of the landmass of Pennsylvania?

Finally, the last question is: What is my duty to self?

Now, for those who maybe it has been awhile since you have been involved in the Scouting family or maybe you just never had that opportunity, there is still time for everybody to get involved and support Scouting. There are a lot of volunteer jobs out there that can be filled. What we mean when we say duty to self, it is not self-serving. We define that by in every action we take and every decision we make, we are prepared to do our best. That is a reflection of the Scout motto and the Scout slogans. So those are principles as Eagle Scouts I really do believe that, by that point, it becomes muscle memory.

Any youth, for whatever period of time they have the opportunity to serve in Scouting, we know based on the research division of the Boy Scouts of America that it makes a difference in their lives.

I will finish up with this. I have said that, as a Scout Master for 30 years, I have seen this work its way out countless times, but let me take a personal privilege and just mention three particular Eagle Scouts: Parker, Logan, and Kale Thompson, my three sons. They are all three Eagle Scouts. They are all adults now. They are scattered—if anything, maybe one flaw is we made them too independent. They are now flourishing, one in Elgin, Illinois; one in San Antonio, Texas; and one in Trenton, New Jersey. Independent—I guess Scouting will do that. You learn to fly as an Eagle Scout.

I will tell you what I have seen. Parker today is a great dad. What he does with his two little guys, I see the lessons he learned in Scouting that just come through in how he nourishes.

Logan, my second son, is a soldier. Although I worried about him, I didn't worry as much when he was deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan because I knew that, as an Eagle Scout, he could handle whatever came to him.

My youngest, Kale, is a music teacher today who nourishes and just serves youth, kids in middle school, and makes such a difference in their lives.

In the lives of my three sons, I see how being a Boy Scout and an Eagle Scout has made them better men and made them better in all the roles that they serve.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I thank Eagle Scout GLENN THOMPSON, Eagle Scout 1977. On behalf of Chief Scout Executive Mike Surbaugh and Members of Congress who gathered together this evening to tell another story, I intend to do it again next month. I intend to get JOHN GARAMENDI, who is one of our dear friends from California, Eagle Class of 1960.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Eagle Scouts of Congress who had time to come tonight, myself, CHRIS COLLINS, JEB HENSARLING, FRENCH HILL, JIM BRIDENSTINE, GT THOMPSON, I am thankful for the hour you have allowed us to tell the story about the Boy Scouts of America, about exceptionalism, about the Order of the Arrow, and about the opportunity for character to lead a great nation.

Mr. Speaker, we are thankful for the time. We will be back. We hope that we leave our campsite better than the way we found it. That is what we try to do every day.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FASO). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues who, for the last hour, have talked about an extremely important part of America's social fabric: the Scouting programs of America. I thank them for bringing to Congress and to the American people the importance of Scouting at all levels. And for those of us who have achieved the rank of Eagle Scout, much was discussed.

Equally important are the men that enter and only spend a couple of weeks and do not pass beyond the Tenderfoot level because they, too, have achieved, at least in part, the opportunities that Scouting presents.

I will talk about that more in the future, and I will look forward to that discussion. In the meantime, let's see if we can now talk about other things that are before Congress and the American public.

Mr. Speaker, almost unnoticed as a result of all of the issues—all of the controversies surrounding the President here in the United States, the controversies of Russia and Russia's involvement in the election, the firing of Comey and the investigations now conducted by a new special counsel, and, of course, the President's foreign travels, with all of that, we have basically not heard much about another extremely important and quite possibly a much longer lasting thing that has happened.

Today the President presented his budget. A budget presented by the President is often just waved aside by the Congress and considered to be dead on arrival, and surely this one should be. But I want to back up for a moment and I want us all to ponder exactly what it is that the President has proposed.

□ 1900

Because, you see, the budget, whether it is a Democratic budget or a Republican budget, an Obama budget or a Trump budget or a George H.W. Bush budget, those budgets are a statement of priorities. They are a statement of the value, the values that is what it is that the President thinks is important and how that fits into the American society.

We need to really understand and value the statement that the President, President Trump, has made in presenting to us his priorities. We ought not just wave it aside and say it is of no consequence because, after all, we are going to rewrite it and we are going to write our own, which is the tradition. However, it would be a gross mistake not to analyze what it is that the President of the United States of America, the strongest, the wealthiest country in the world, has proposed.

Take a careful look, America. Don't just brush it aside. This is what the President wants. This is what he wants us to be. This is his vision of America.

I must tell you, it is awful—not my words only, but the words of many Republican leaders, of, obviously, the Democrats.

Take a look, America, at what it is he is proposing.

I am going to run through some of this because we need to understand, Members of Congress, we Americans need to understand what it is that this President wants us to be, what it is he sees as America. I am going to go through just some things very, very quickly, and then we want to go into it perhaps in a little more detail.

Medicaid is a program that has been in existence for some 60-plus years. It is a program that provides healthcare to the poor. It is a program that provides care to seniors. It is a program that is relied upon all across this country by families so that the children and adults can get medical care.

The President has proposed, in his budget, a $610 billion reduction in Medicare on top of, in addition to, an $800 billion cut in what we know now as Trump and RyanCare, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act. A $1.5 trillion reduction in medical services to the poor. And they are not all kids. They are not all families. More than half of that money goes to seniors in nursing homes.

This is the vision of the President of the United States: $1.5 trillion reduction in medical services over the next 10 years to working men and women just above the poverty level, to seniors who are in nursing homes, and to women and children who are below the poverty level. This is his vision of healthcare in America.

And that is not all. That is not the end of the story.

In the 1990s, we knew that children not covered by Medicaid or, in California, Medi-Cal were not getting medical services; and so the American people, through their representatives in

Congress and the Senate, created what we now know as the Children's Health Insurance Program, CHIP—Children's Health Insurance Program.

And so what is the vision? What is the value? What is the moral purpose of our President?

He would cut $3.2 billion out of that program and effectively deny medical services for the 6 million children that are currently covered by the Children's Health Insurance Program.

For the aged, blind, and disabled—the aged, blind, and disabled Americans—that receive supplemental Social Security programs, $64 billion would be cut from those aged, blind, and disabled who receive supplemental Social Security insurance.

Students? How many times on this floor of the House of Representatives have we heard Democrats and Republicans talk about the terrible problem of student loans, the huge cost of providing educational services? So what is in this budget?

Student loans, financial aid, and repayment, $143 billion reduction. How does that help our educational program? How does that help students who are suffering under the cost of higher education? I don't know what the answer is except it does not.

For men and women who are working at minimum wage or below minimum wage across the United States, there is a program that was established by Richard Nixon called the earned income tax credit to encourage people to work. Men and women that are out there working but at a low wage, minimum wage, the earned income tax credit was established to lift them up to a liveable amount of money and encourage them to continue to work.

What does the President propose? Well, let's cut, by $40 billion, the earned income tax credit and the child tax credit.

It goes on and on. This is President Trump's statement of what he values in America.

I think it is immoral. I think it is terrible public policy, and, when coupled with the rest of the story, it becomes an abomination.

The rest of the story, the rest of the story is the most massive tax cut ever for the wealthy in the United States. You take that tax cut that has been proposed in the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, ObamaCare, and you couple it with the tax cuts that are embedded in the President's budget, and we are talking somewhere north of $3.5 trillion tax cuts, 80 percent of which goes to the top 20 percent of America's income earners.

All the discussion last year about income inequality from President Trump, from Hillary Clinton, from everybody else about income inequality and the problem it presents to America was somehow forgotten. Because, when you take the repeal of the Affordable Care Act, which some call the American Health Care Act now, and you couple it with this budget, the tax cuts that are embedded in both of them amount to the largest transfer of wealth ever in tax policy from the poor, from the working Americans, to the top earners in America, to the superwealthy.

If you are concerned about income inequality, this is exactly backwards. It is from the working men and women, the middle class of America and the poor to the wealthy. That is exactly what is happening here.

Is that a rational vision of America? Is this a sense of value of what America is all about: more for the wealthy, less for the working men and women, the middle class, for the families that presumably—presumably—were at the heart of last year's election?

Yes, we heard Mr. Trump and we heard Ms. Clinton go around the Nation talking about how we need to raise up the middle class, how we need to deal with this income inequality, what a problem it was for our society and our economy, months and months of political rhetoric. And now we see what is actually—actually—taking place: the greatest transfer of wealth from the middle class and the poor to the wealthy that has ever been found in any piece of legislation proposed.

God help us if it is enacted. Watch carefully, America. This budget, the repeal of the Affordable Care Act together with the proposed tax cuts, will devastate, seriously harm, personal lives in America by taking away their health insurance, by taking away their money that they depend upon to pay their rent, to put food on the table, to care for their children.

This is not the America that I want to see, and I don't think this is the America that the American public voted for. Whether they were a Democrat or a Republican, whether they voted for Trump or Hillary, they did not envision an America that would take $1.5 trillion out of the Medicaid program, of which 50 percent of that money goes to seniors in nursing homes.

I don't think that is what they had in mind when they voted last November. That is not what they were promised. That is not what either of the two candidates promised. They promised to deal with this income inequality issue. They promised, both of them, to provide more healthcare, not less. That is just on this one side of it.

Neither promised massive tax cuts for the superwealthy. In fact, both railed against the way in which we have seen those at the top of the heap benefit while the rest were stagnated. Both candidates did that. And yet the proposal that has been put before this Congress in the last 127 days has been quite the opposite.

The repeal of the Affordable Care Act, ripping away healthcare benefits for 24 million Americans, and now on top of it, this budget proposal that the President has given to us.

□ 1915

I want to take just another moment because this one ought to be close to every American. In the President's budget proposal, there is a $7 billion reduction for research in the National Institutes of Health. What does the National Institutes of Health do? It does research. It does research on disease. Over the years, Democrats, Republicans, both sides of the aisle have put forth proposals to advance and increase the research in healthcare.

And the result? The result of that is this. I have used this many times on the floor. As I looked at the President's proposal to cut $7 billion out of the National Institutes of Health, I thought we ought to come back to this. Deaths from major diseases over the years. Because we have invested in research, we have seen breast cancer deaths decline by 2 percent, prostate cancer decline by 11 percent, heart disease decline by 14 percent, stroke by 23 percent, HIV/AIDS by 52 percent. That is what happens when you invest in research. That is what happens when we take the taxpayer money and we put it into research on healthcare and medical issues.

Today, the National Institutes of Health has $5 billion of valuable research projects that cannot be funded, research projects on all of these. Instead of adding an additional $5 billion, the President proposes to give that $5 billion to the wealthiest of Americans. The top 40 families in America, under his proposals, would receive a $7 million reduction in their taxes. And I daresay that four or five of those families are either the President's family or in the Cabinet.

This purple line here, this one, over the last year, we have increased the funding for Alzheimer's from just over $500 million to just under $1 billion. This one is out of control. Every family in America is experiencing the effects of dementia and Alzheimer's. My family. My mother-in-law spent her last 3 years in our home and died of Alzheimer's. It is not unusual. In fact, it is common.

Incidentally, cancer is some $6 billion a year for research; heart disease, $5 billion; HIV/AIDS, about $3 billion; Alzheimer's about $900 million. We know that if we were to spend the money, we could delay the onset, dramatically improve the lives not only of the individuals but of the families.

So what does the President propose? Not adding $5 billion for research that we know would provide benefits, extend the lives of Americans. He proposed to cut by $7 billion. Is this a statement of his values, of what he thinks is important, of his morality, of his administration? On the floor of the House, in the cloakrooms, what is argued and often said is that each and every bill that passes here, each and every proposal that we introduce, is a statement of our own personal sense of morality of what is right and what is wrong, of values.

Today, I looked at the Hill papers, what we fondly call the Hill rags, three of them. The top story is not the President's budget. The top story is the

President's scandals. But I will tell you this: This budget is the real story because this is going to live on. This is what we will be fighting about. All the issues of the scandal in Russia and everything else will be dealt with by others and some of our committees, but this is what is going to affect the American public in their homes, in their lives, in their healthcare, in their education, and in their jobs. The President proposed a budget, and it is a reflection of what he believes to be important. That is a scandal.

I can go on and on here, and I suppose I promised some that I wouldn't. There is much that we can do. There is much that we need to do. We have great needs in the United States. We need an infrastructure program. We need a healthcare system that provides benefits to all in which the costs are controlled. We have a military and we have national security, and we will debate these things, but I cannot let a day go by without contemplating what it is that the President has proposed to America. Not to us but to America. And it is not good.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for 30 minutes.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I am so grateful to Mr. ALBIO SIRES, my good friend from New Jersey, the ranking member of our Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere in the Committee on Foreign Affairs for joining me tonight for this Special Order regarding the deteriorating situation in Venezuela, demonstrating not only the bipartisan nature of this issue, Mr. Speaker, but also the need for the United States, and specifically the Congress, to be even more engaged.

As Mr. SIRES knows—and we will hear from him in just a few minutes—the situation in Venezuela, as you can see here, is becoming more desperate by the day. The humanitarian situation is getting worse, if one can imagine that. The Maduro regime continues its flagrant human rights violations, and, despite the latest round of sanctions against human rights violators imposed by our excellent Treasury Department, the United States needs to take more decisive steps in support of the people of Venezuela.

Mr. Speaker, at least 48 Venezuelans have been killed in almost 2 months of protests, nonstop protests, against the dictatorship responsible for a litany of crimes. You cannot enumerate them. Horrific human rights abuses, drug trafficking, a rapidly worsening humanitarian situation. The list goes on and on, Mr. Speaker.

Venezuelans do not have access to even the most basic of necessities, which means water, food, and medicine. None of that exists in Venezuela. Venezuelan humanitarian shortages of food and medicine. People are standing in lines to get nothing. The Venezuelan Pharmaceutical Federation estimates that the country is running shortages on nearly every necessary medical item. For those few Venezuelans who could afford to purchase medicine, they are forced to pay exorbitant prices for supplies like gauze, pain relievers, Band-Aids, and that is only if they are available in the first place, Mr. Speaker. Hospital workers have told us that the supplies are being raided, and they are being sold on the black market.

The situation is no better when it comes to food. Last week, a 46-year-old man was killed by soldiers as he was on his way home from buying diapers for his baby. Killed while buying diapers for his baby. Why? Because diapers are a scarce commodity. They have been a scarce commodity for over a year now in Venezuela, a country that was abundant in natural resources. Earlier this week, this very week, a 15-year-old boy was shot and killed for the crime of buying flour.

One study reports that 75 percent of the population of Venezuela—this is unbelievable—has lost an average of 19 pounds due to food shortages. Even obtaining water can be an expensive proposition for those without running water at home. The shortage of basic goods has led to massive lines, has led to violence, has led to looting as people have become increasingly desperate for the basic, meager means to survive. We are just talking about basic necessities, Mr. Speaker.

This tragic humanitarian situation could have been prevented, Mr. Speaker, and no one is more responsible than the thug who rules Venezuela with an iron fist, Nicolas Maduro, and his despotic regime. The Maduro dictatorship presides over the world's largest oil reserves yet has managed to run the state oil company and the entire economy into the ground.

Socialism does not work. Communism does not work. One need only look at Venezuela. Instead of allowing humanitarian relief, the regime has nationalized the food and medical supply chain and put corrupt officials in charge. What could go wrong?

Earlier this month, I wrote a letter, along with my good friend ALBIO SIRES, as well as ELIOT ENGEL, the ranking member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and 12 other congressional colleagues joined Mr. SIRES, Mr. ENGEL, and myself, urging the administration to use its voice, to use our vote, to use our influence at the United Nations Security Council to demand that Venezuelan authorities allow the delivery and the distribution of humanitarian aid. We were giving them what they need. Maduro would have none of it.

But I applaud our U.S. Ambassador at the U.N., Nikki Haley, for organizing a Security Council meeting on Venezuela last week. But more needs to be done, Mr. Speaker. As Ambassador Haley bravely said, Venezuela is on the edge of a humanitarian crisis, right here in our hemisphere. Humanitarian agencies must be allowed to operate independently in Venezuela, without interference from the thuggish Maduro regime, and deliver the aid that the people so desperately need. The world is ready to help Venezuela. Nicolas Maduro refuses this help.

Humanitarian agencies must say to Maduro, if they are hindered in any way, then those responsible must be held to account. Before I continue, Mr. Speaker, to address the Maduro regime's abuse of human rights in greater detail and how the United States can be a force for good in Venezuela, I yield to ALBIO SIRES, my good friend from New Jersey.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Florida. I want to commend her for her passion and her commitment to helping the people of Venezuela. I thank her for making me part of this Special Order.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the ongoing crisis in Venezuela. With every week that passes, we see the situation in Venezuela becoming more critical.

□ 1930

A country with the world's largest known oil reserves is spiraling into a collapsed state where people are struggling just to survive. Journalists and citizens risk their lives every day to report what is happening inside Caracas and around the country. We see that tensions are growing, and government security forces shoot first and don't even bother to ask questions later.

Maduro continues to keep political prisoners like Leopoldo Lopez under lock and key to send a strong message to those trying to question his actions. Just yesterday, we saw reports that government buildings in western Venezuela are being set ablaze. Make no mistake: It is the failed Chavismo policies and the authoritarian actions of Nicolas Maduro that have brought all of this pain and suffering upon the Venezuelan people.

Press reports show that of 800,000 businesses that opened during the Chavez regime, nearly 600,000 have shut down. Both the Obama and Trump administrations have sanctioned senior officials in the Venezuelan Government for their associations with narcotrafficking, money laundering, and other illicit activities.

Just today, Reuters released an exclusive report that the Venezuelan Government is in possession of 5,000 shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles that are typically used to shoot down low-flying planes and helicopters.

Last week, Spanish authorities interdicted a shipment of 6 tons of cocaine from Venezuela en route to their shores. With the recent sanctions of Vice President Tareck El Aissami, under the Kingpin Act, it has become clear that Venezuela's Government is

acting as a narco-state and facilitating the shipment of narcotics throughout the region. These sanctions are not against the Venezuelan people but are carefully crafted and targeted towards the individuals who are committed to destroying the lives of millions of innocent civilians in exchange for money and power.

Last week, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned members of Venezuela's Supreme Court for their rulings that stripped power away from the National Assembly, further consolidating Maduro's authoritarian regime. Maduro and his cronies continue to get rich as they traffic money and drugs while doing nothing to help the millions of suffering people in Venezuela. They continue to loot the country as reports regarding the worsening situation continue to make front-page news throughout the region. Maduro's tactics are making it impossible to survive.

Multiple news reports confirm a growing health crisis as people lack access to basic medicines, and infant mortality rates and preventable diseases such as diptheria, malaria, and the Zika virus are all on the rise. In addition, nearly every day we hear of young children whose lives are cut short, whether it is from a bullet from Maduro's thugs or the lack of access to food, water, and basic services.

That is why I am grateful for the efforts of my colleagues here tonight who have supported several initiatives in Congress that work to hold these thugs accountable. My colleagues and I have held hearings, sent letters, and met with our allies in the region to work together to try to bring sound relief to the Venezuelan people.

Meanwhile, instead of focusing on the economy, Maduro is staging mock military exercises and stoking fears by spreading propaganda of U.S.-led invasion.

The truth about Maduro is clear, and the international community is starting to unify against him. The OAS Secretary General Luis Almagro has wisely called for Venezuela's suspension from the OAS unless it frees its political prisoners, accepts humanitarian aid, and holds elections without delay.

I believe we need to work together with our allies around the world and continue to insist Maduro abide by international norms and give the Venezuelan people the freedom they deserve.

I thank my dear friend from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, and the other Members here tonight for their relentless commitment to these important issues.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. SIRES for such an eloquent statement on behalf of the beleaguered and embattled Venezuelan people.

Before I yield so proudly to Mr. CASTRO of Texas, another member of our Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, I would like to say just a few words about the continuing human rights abuses and the deteriorating situation in Venezuela.

As we have heard from Mr. SIRES, we are dealing with a corrupt dictatorship, and we are dealing with a brutal dictatorship. At least 42 are dead and 90 arrested since protests began in March of 2017, you can see on this poster.

This is a dictatorship that will go to all lengths to maintain its tight grip on power and silence the opposition by tear gas, by real bullets, by jailing, and by intimidation. The people of Venezuela are literally dying, Mr. Speaker, on the streets from the violence of the Maduro regime. They are dying on the streets from starvation, and they are dying from the lack of medical supplies, yet they still risk their lives.

This goes on each and every day in Venezuela. They go out into the streets. They demonstrate to the world that they will not be silenced, and what they desire is freedom, and what they desire is democracy, and what they desire is nothing less and nothing more than their God-given human rights, the very same intangibles that many in America here take for granted because we live in the greatest country in the world. We take for granted that we have our freedom.

But the ideals that we proudly espouse and defend around the world are alive and well in the streets of Venezuela. Venezuelans are protesting against the regime's continual assaults on Venezuela's constitutional and democratic order.

Like Chavez before him, Nicolas Maduro has a horrific human rights record, including restrictions on freedom of expression, restrictions on the press, widespread arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, torture, and the list goes on and on.

In its human rights reports on Venezuela last year, our own State Department noted how the Maduro regime has misused the judiciary to undermine the National Assembly, a body overwhelmingly manipulated by the opposition since December of 2015. This opposition has risen to power thanks to the vote of the people.

So what did Nicolas Maduro say? Well, his supreme court nullified almost every action taken by the National Assembly, including refusing to allow lawmakers to take their seats in the legislature and overturning laws to free political prisoners and grow the economy.

I am so pleased to see that we have been joined by the chairman of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, Mr. DUNCAN, tonight.

But things have only gotten worse since that time. In March, the regime controlled the Supreme Tribunal of Justice—a sad name for what it does—and ruled that it would resume the responsibilities of the National Assembly. It said: We are the state. Who needs the National Assembly that is manipulated and controlled by the opposition? We nullify its actions. We will assume the responsibility.

And although what the Tribunal said, they had to backtrack almost immediately because the condemnation internationally was so loud. It partially reversed its decision just a few days later, but the damage was already done, Mr. Speaker. Venezuelans had further proof of a break in the constitutional order.

Anti-regime protests have been going on, as we can see here, day after day, day after day, as hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans have taken to the streets to demand relief from the Maduro repression. According to The New York Times, before these protests even began, Mr. Speaker, the Maduro regime had arrested 6,893 people, jailed 433 for political reasons just in the past few years, and there are at least 175 political prisoners behind bars today, including Leopoldo Lopez and Daniel Ceballos.

Joshua Holt, a United States citizen, Mr. Speaker, is being unjustly held for nearly a year. In September, I wrote a letter, joined by my colleagues here, to the State Department about Joshua's case. Joshua Holt's health has deteriorated over the last month. I urged the State Department to secure his unconditional release on humanitarian grounds. We all were humbled to meet with Joshua Holt's mom, who is so anxious to see his release, just last month.

So, Mr. Speaker, despite all of the Maduro regime's human rights abuses, the beatings, the violence, the murders, the repression, and the political prisoners, despite all of this, the Venezuelan people are refusing to be silenced. They are rising up, and they are protesting in even greater numbers. This is just amazing.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO), my good friend from the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee.

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congresswoman ROS-LEHTINEN and Congressman ALBIO SIRES for their incredible work on this issue and all of their passion. I also thank the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee chairman, Congressman DUNCAN. I know how much he has worked on the issue of Venezuela, and Latin America also.

The people of Venezuela are in dire need of humanitarian assistance to endure critical food and medicine shortages. The desperation, oppression, and violence in Venezuela really are reaching a breaking point.

Three out of four Venezuelans have lost significant weight during the last year due to food shortages.

In 2016, the nation suffered a homicide rate of 91.8 per 100,000 people, making Venezuela the second most violent country in the world outside of a war zone.

We have reason to believe more than half of Venezuelans want to leave their home country.

Last year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said Colombia should expect an ''avalanche'' of Venezuelan refugees, an influx that

could complicate this critical time for Colombia's own peace agreement. Meanwhile, President Maduro's government is taking increasingly antidemocratic actions in violation of Venezuela's own constitution.

Since Venezuela's supreme court attempted to dissolve the country's legislature in March, the Venezuelan people have sustained massive protests, leading to a brutal crackdown from government security forces. The best outcome for this political crisis is a Venezuelan solution: a peaceful return to free and fair elections.

At the same time, the United States has a responsibility to work alongside our allies at the Organization of American States and the United Nations to hold Maduro's government accountable and to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela.

Last week, President Trump authorized sanctions against the members of Venezuela's supreme court who attempted to shut down the legislature. While U.S. sanctions against individuals in the Maduro regime are justified, sanctions work best when implemented multilaterally. More importantly, unilateral actions are no substitute for collective, coordinated pressure.

The OAS has scheduled a meeting of foreign ministers on the situation in Venezuela to take place on May 31 here in Washington, D.C. This meeting presents an opportunity to work with our partners and Venezuela's neighbors to support a return to democracy and respect for human rights. I hope Secretary Tillerson will represent the United States at this meeting and demonstrate our Nation's support for the Venezuelan people.

One of the reasons that I chose to join the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee when I was already part of the Foreign Affairs Committee is because I believe that there are many things that happen in Latin America that don't get the attention that they deserve here in the United States.

□ 1945

It is amazing to think that there is a human rights crisis going on right now in our own Western Hemisphere. Of course, there are many challenges around the world. We know that because of the war in Syria and the unrest in the region, Europe, over the last few years, has faced its largest migration crisis since World War II.

There are challenges with human rights and freedom in every continent just about. But we have to make sure that we attend to the things that are happening in our own backyard, so to speak.

So I thank each of you for being here tonight to speak up on this issue of human rights in Venezuela and the crisis that they are going through.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, we are so pleased that Mr. CASTRO has, once again, joined us in this battle for human rights, for democracy, for justice, for the rule of law, in our hemisphere. His voice is a valiant one that needs to be heard and is always present whenever the struggle for human rights is mentioned.

So thank you, Mr. CASTRO, for this stance today and for the stance that you have taken on behalf of beleaguered people in our hemisphere every day.

Now, Mr. SIRES and I are so thankful that our subcommittee chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN), has joined us.

As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, Mr. SIRES is the ranking member of that subcommittee, and Mr. DUNCAN is the chairman of that subcommittee, a valiant voice for freedom that must be heard.

I yield to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. DUNCAN).

Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the chairwoman, former chairwoman of the full committee when I first came to Congress, and a real leader on foreign affairs issues, focused on Cuba and Venezuela. She has been a real mentor to me, and I want to thank her for her work on this, giving us the opportunity to speak tonight.

Again, Ranking Member SIRES has been a champion on our subcommittee. I want to echo the words about Mr. CASTRO as well. We have got a great Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere focusing on freedom and democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

What we see in Venezuela is alarming, as well as it is saddening, when we hear about Venezuelans who are scrounging for food in the dumpsters, eating domesticated animals, even flamingos; people who are hungry because the socialistic policies of the Maduro and the previous Chavez regime has not worked in Venezuela. A country that has bountiful natural resources, more oil than Saudi Arabia, should be leading this hemisphere in economics.

Yet because of the policies of the Chavez and Maduro governments, the people of Venezuela are continuing to be oppressed. This weekend, more than 2,000 Venezuelans took to the streets, marking, I think, the 50th day of protests against this regime. I can't think of any other way to describe this faux democracy in Venezuela, other than a regime.

The Venezuelan people are standing up and calling for a new government. They are calling for more democracy, true democracy, representation in their own government, freedoms that we take for granted here in this country, freedoms of speech, and the right to peacefully assemble, the right to participate in their government and have accountability, the right to petition their government for grievances. And they have got some grievances against the Maduro regime.

Yet Maduro continues to oppress the Venezuelan people. It is not unlike what we have seen in Cuba. Folks, socialism doesn't work, and it is not working in Venezuela, and they are a prime example. But Maduro doesn't want to listen to his own people in Venezuela and call for new democratic elections, where the people elect their representatives to congress and to the Presidency.

But he has called for elections, and he said just recently: ''Votes or bullets. What do the people want?' Maduro asked a crowd of red-shirted supporters waving Venezuela flags at the Miraflores presidential palace.''

Votes or bullets? Is that how we talk about the democratic process in a true democracy? I say no, and I tell the Venezuelan people, America stands with you as you approach democracy.

It is time for more people in this hemisphere and the Organization of American States, all the member countries, to stand with the Venezuelan people, and let's change the government in Venezuela through peaceful means, democratic means, that their Constitution calls for.

But yet, Maduro is ignoring the Constitution. In fact, he got the Supreme Court to go along with him to discount the National Assembly there, and, luckily, they reversed course on that because they realized the world was watching and the world was saying that is not how democracies operate.

The Venezuelan people need the support of the world, and I call on the world today to come to the backs, standing with, watching the backs of the Venezuelan people, because Maduro has told his snipers to get ready; told his snipers to get ready to attack the protesters that are protesting a supposed democrat government. Wow.

So I want to thank the chairwoman. I want to thank Ambassador Nikki Haley, former Governor of South Carolina, who has stood strong in the U.N. as Ambassador to the U.N. for the Trump administration. I want to thank her for standing with the Venezuelan people for democratic principles.

I want to thank all those in this Chamber, including my ranking member, for having stern and direct conversations with the OAS about Venezuela.

I want to thank Argentina for what they have done, stepping up to the plate. These are countries that understand the democratic process.

I want to thank Brazil for actually allowing the democratic process to work in the country of Brazil through an impeachment of their President, and allowing the democratic forces to work to return that to a representative government.

It is time for America to stand with our friends about democratic principles here. Snipers? That is not how we operate.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. I yield back the balance of my time.

THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN VENEZUELA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2017, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SIRES) for 30 minutes.

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I want to take this moment to thank my colleague and my chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee for always being present on all the important issues, human rights issues in the Western Hemisphere.

And of course, I want to thank my colleague from Florida, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, for her passion and determination to bring democracy to Venezuela.

Before I recognize my good friend from Florida, MARIO DIAZ-BALART, I would just like to say that Venezuela basically has taken a page out of the Castro brothers. This is how the process in Cuba started. Fifty-five years later, there is nothing but oppression, no freedom of expression, no election, and, quite frankly, there are approximately about 30,000 Cubans in Venezuela running the security apparatus.

But I want the Venezuelan people to know that we are fighting along with them, that we are talking to all the Presidents, all the leaders in the Western Hemisphere, to put pressure on Venezuela to develop the democracy and stop the abuse of human rights in Venezuela.

At this time, I yield to my good friend from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART), who is also a fighter for human rights and who has been always in the forefront of human rights in the Western Hemisphere.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, let me first start by thanking the leadership, the steadfast, never confused leadership of Congressman ALBIO SIRES. He is a man who I have had the privilege of traveling with to Eastern Europe, where he is known there, as he is in the United States, for one who is always fighting for those who are repressed, oppressed around the world; which is why the people of Venezuela know that they can count on Congressman ALBIO SIRES for his leadership.

Thank you, sir, for never giving up, never fighting, never forgetting those who are struggling under repression. You mentioned Congresswoman ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN. She is a giant, a giant in the Halls of Congress, a giant for not only things that obviously affect us here domestically, because she is fighting for those, particularly those who are the least fortunate in our society.

But if there is somebody who is known internationally as a fighter for those who, again, are struggling for freedom, it is ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN.

I thank you also, Mr. SIRES, for mentioning the chairman of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee. We just heard from him, a person who, again, is on the same track of always making sure that the—he makes the United States look good by never forgetting human rights as a fundamental pillar of our foreign policy.

The people of Venezuela are demonstrating that they are, in fact, the heirs of Simon Bolivar. They are showing now, with 50 days of consecutive demonstrations in the streets, that they are not willing to accept repression. They are not willing to accept any more of this dictatorship; that they are not willing to accept, as Mr. SIRES mentioned, in essence, a takeover from the Cuban regime of their beautiful country of Venezuela.

And they are suffering because of that activism, that bravery of hitting the streets. About almost 50 of them have been murdered since this last number of demonstrations have taken place, not to mention the dozens upon dozens of political prisoners, whether it is political leaders, mayors, et cetera, who are in prison just because they are not willing to stand by while their country has been taken over by this horrendous, narco-terrorist, murderous dictatorship.

Frankly, I am here to commend the Venezuelan people and, as Mr. SIRES said, to let them know that they are not alone, that we stand with them, that the United States Congress stands with them.

But I would be remiss if I didn't end as I started, Mr. Speaker, by thanking these individuals who have spoken already: the giant of human rights in the House of Representatives, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, the chairman of the subcommittee, who never gets confused, and who is always fighting for those who are struggling to regain or gain their freedom; and yes, ALBIO SIRES, who I have had the privilege of seeing, not only who he is recognized here in this Congress by his colleagues as a true freedom fighter for human rights, but I have been able to travel with him and see that whenever you go anywhere with ALBIO SIRES, he is also recognized around the world as that champion for freedom.

So what a privilege to be part of and to be able to spend this time with you. Thanks to each and every one of you for not forgetting the struggle of Venezuela. I know that you have done it in your committee, you have done it in your subcommittee, and this Congress is grateful, and this Member of Congress is grateful for your leadership.

And I know that the Venezuelan people who are showing incredible bravery know, and history will record that, in their toughest moments, when they were putting their lives on the line, all of you, and this Congress, stood with them.

So with that, thank you, Mr. SIRES, for yielding to me.

Mr. SIRES. Thank you, Congressman. Thank you for all your passion and all your effort on behalf of those people who need it the most, the people in Venezuela.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to end by saying, you know, I remember years ago when Spain went through 39 years of dictatorships in the Franco era. And one of the things that happened that was able to develop democracy in Spain was the fact that all the European countries got together and helped and assisted in developing a democracy in Spain. I think the same thing needs to happen in this region.

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The countries of our Venezuela have to demand that Venezuela release its political prisoners, that it has free elections, and stop the human rights abuses. After all, it is in their best interest that a stable Venezuela is good for a stable region.

Mr. Speaker, I thank very much my colleague, ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN, always for her passion on this issue. She is the little giant of human rights in this Congress. I thank her and my colleague, MARIO DIAZ-BALART.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 2 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at 10 a.m. for morning-hour debate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1410. A letter from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's Major final priorities, requirements, definitions, and selection criteria — Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (SRCL) Program [CFDA Number: 84.371C.] [Docket ID: ED-2015-OESE-0129] (RIN: 1810-AB25) received May 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

1411. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 16-011, pursuant to Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1412. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 16-043, pursuant to Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1413. A letter from the Acting Under Secretary, Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 15-132, pursuant to Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1414. A letter from the Acting Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, transmitting the Corporation's FY 2016 No FEAR Act report, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 2301 note; Public Law 107-174, 203(a) (as amended by Public Law 109-435, Sec. 604(f)); (120 Stat. 3242); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1415. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Final Rule to List 6 Foreign Species of Elasmobranchs Under the Endangered Species Act [Docket No.: 150909839-7369-02] (RIN: 0648-XE184) received May 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1416. A letter from the Acting Deputy Assistant Administrator For Regulatory Programs, Office of Protected Resources, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, transmitting the Administration's final rule — Takes of Marine Mammals Incidental to Specified Activities; U.S. Navy Training Activities in the Gulf of Alaska Temporary Maritime Activities Area [Docket No.: 141125997-7365-02] (RIN: 0648-BE67) received May 19, 2017, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); Public Law 104-121, Sec. 251; (110 Stat. 868); to the Committee on Natural Resources.

1417. A letter from the Acting Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting the Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu National Blue Alert Act Report to Congress for May 2017, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 14165b(f); Public Law 114-12, Sec. 4(f); (129 Stat. 196); to the Committee on the Judiciary.

1418. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting a report entitled ''Computation of Annual Liability Insurance (Including Self-Insurance), No-Fault Insurance, and Workers' Compensation Settlement Recovery Threshold'', pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 1395y(b)(9)(D); Aug. 14, 1935, ch. 531, title XVIII, Sec. 1862(b)(9)(D) (as added by Public Law 112-242, Sec. 202(a)(2)); (126 Stat. 2379); jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

1419. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the fiscal year 2016 report of the Federal Coordinated Health Care Office (Medicare-Medicaid Coordination Office), pursuant to Sec. 2602(e) of the Affordable Care Act, as revised by the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010; jointly to the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Ways and Means.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 1461. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to limit the instances in which official time may be granted for certain purposes to employees of the Department, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115–146, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to veterans (Rept. 115–147). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 1005. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans (Rept. 115–148). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 467. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, and for other purposes (Rept. 115–149, Pt. 1). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. ROE of Tennessee: Committee on Veterans' Affairs. H.R. 1848. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the use of medical scribes in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers (Rept. 115–151). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. BUCK: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 352. Resolution providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1761) to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from May 26, 2017, through June 5, 2017 (Rept. 115–152). Referred to the House Calendar.

DISCHARGE OF COMMITTEE

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform discharged from further consideration. H.R. 467 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Ways and Means discharged from further consideration. H.R. 624 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Pursuant to clause 2 of rule XIII, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform discharged from further consideration. H.R. 1461 referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

REPORTED BILLS SEQUENTIALLY REFERRED

Under clause 2 of rule XII, bills and reports were delivered to the Clerk for printing, and bills referred as follows:

Mr. CHAFFETZ: Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. H.R. 624. A bill to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on documents sent by mail by the Federal Government, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 115–50, Pt. 1); referred to the Committee on Ways and Means for a period ending not later than May 23, 2017, for consideration of such provisions of the bill and amendment as fall within the jurisdiction of that committee pursuant to clause 1(t) of rule X.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. HUNTER (for himself, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. SHUSTER, and Mr. DEFAZIO):

H.R. 2593. A bill to authorize appropriations for the Federal Maritime Commission for fiscal years 2018 and 2019, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Mrs. MURPHY of Florida, and Mr. KNIGHT):

H.R. 2594. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to provide interim partial payment to small business contractors that request an equitable adjustment due to a change in the terms of a construction contract, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business.

By Ms. SPEIER (for herself and Mr. WOODALL):

H.R. 2595. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect to have the United States Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. O'ROURKE (for himself, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. VELA, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. CUELLAR, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas):

H.R. 2596. A bill to designate the Castner Range in the State of Texas, to establish the Castner Range National Monument, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Armed Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. SERRANO, and Ms. CLARKE of New York):

H.R. 2597. A bill to extend temporary protected status for certain nationals of Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea until November 21, 2018; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARBAJAL (for himself, Ms. ESTY of Connecticut, and Mr. BEYER):

H.R. 2598. A bill to provide family members of an individual who they fear is a danger to himself, herself, or others new tools to prevent gun violence; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania (for himself and Mr. THOMPSON of California):

H.R. 2599. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to refine how Medicare pays for orthotics and prosthetics and to improve beneficiary experience and outcomes with orthotic and prosthetic care, and for

other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. YOUNG of Iowa:

H.R. 2600. A bill to provide for the conveyance to the State of Iowa of the reversionary interest held by the United States in certain land in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. DUNN (for himself, Mr. CORREA, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BANKS of Indiana, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Mr. RUTHERFORD, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mr. POLIQUIN, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. BOST, Mr. BACON, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. ROSS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. BERGMAN, Mr. HUDSON, and Mr. ARRINGTON):

H.R. 2601. A bill to amend the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 to improve the access of veterans to organ transplants, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 2602. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to include training for certain employees of air carriers to combat human trafficking, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GOHMERT (for himself, Mr. BABIN, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. MARSHALL, and Mr. HUNTER):

H.R. 2603. A bill to amend the Endangered Species Act of 1973 to provide that nonnative species in the United States shall not be treated as endangered species or threatened species for purposes of that Act; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama (for himself, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. GOHMERT, and Mr. MCCAUL):

H.R. 2604. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to modify the procedure to designate a foreign state, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. GOODLATTE (for himself, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. GOWDY, and Ms. JACKSON LEE):

H.R. 2605. A bill to provide for additional resources for the Secret Service, and to improve protections for restricted areas; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. COLE (for himself, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. LUCAS, and Mr. RUSSELL):

H.R. 2606. A bill to amend the Act of August 4, 1947, (commonly known as the Stigler Act) with respect to restrictions applicable to Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes of Oklahoma, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida (for himself and Mr. MOULTON):

H.R. 2607. A bill to amend the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 to authorize grants for frequent and chronic coastal flooding mitigation and adaptation infrastructure projects; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. KUSTOFF of Tennessee, Mr. ARRINGTON, and Mr. GOTTHEIMER):

H.R. 2608. A bill to amend title 23, United States Code, with respect to apportionments to States for certain highway programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 2609. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Army to revise certain authorized purposes described in the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System Master Water Control Manual; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. HASTINGS:

H.R. 2610. A bill to require reimbursement from certain public officials whose travel results in unusual costs relating to protection of those officials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HILL (for himself and Mr. LEWIS of Georgia):

H.R. 2611. A bill to modify the boundary of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H.R. 2612. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, encourage the placement of released Federal prisoners in residential reentry centers near their homes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS:

H.R. 2613. A bill to restore employment and educational opportunities in, and improve the economic stability of, counties containing National Forest System land, while also reducing Forest Service management costs, by ensuring that such counties have a dependable source of revenue from timber sales conducted on National Forest System land, to reduce payments under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 to reflect such counties' receipt of timber sale revenues, to strengthen stewardship end result contracting, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 2614. A bill to direct the Attorney General to establish metrics and standards to determine the effectiveness in the programs of the Department of Justice in combating gangs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PALAZZO:

H.R. 2615. A bill to authorize the exchange of certain land located in Gulf Islands National Seashore, Jackson County, Mississippi, between the National Park Service and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SCHRADER (for himself and Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER):

H.R. 2616. A bill to provide for statutes of limitations for certain civil actions under the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CONNOLLY (for himself, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BEYER, and Mr. FITZPATRICK):

H. Con. Res. 60. Concurrent resolution recognizing the September 11th National Memorial Trail as an important trail and greenway to be enjoyed by all in honor of the heroes of September 11th; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. ENGEL, Mr. ISSA, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. ROYCE of California, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Ms. TITUS, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. DENT, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. MACARTHUR, Mr. LOBIONDO, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. COOK, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. SIRES, Ms. FRANKEL of Florida, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. POCAN, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. DEUTCH, and Mr. SCHNEIDER):

H. Res. 351. A resolution condemning the violence and persecution in Chechnya; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. HUNTER:

H.R. 2593.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 2594.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Ms. SPEIER:

H.R. 2595.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. O'ROURKE:

H.R. 2596.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution:

To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Office thereof.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 2597.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4 of the Constitution of the United States, which states that Congress shall have the power to ''establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization.''

By Mr. CARBAJAL:

H.R. 2598.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Constitutional authority in which this bill rests is the power of the Congress to regulate commerce, as enumerated by Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania:

H.R. 2599.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3; and including, but not solely limited to Article I, Section 8, Clause 14.

By Mr. YOUNG of Iowa:

H.R. 2600.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States

By Mr. DUNN:

H.R. 2601.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Constitutional Authority on which this Bill rests is the power of Congress to make all law which are nessescary and proper pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 14 of the United States Constitution.

By Ms. TITUS:

H.R. 2602.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Amendment XIII

Section 1, ''Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.''

Section 2, ''Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.''

By Mr. GOHMERT:

H.R. 2603.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8 Clause 18

By Mr. BROOKS of Alabama:

H.R. 2604.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1 Section 8

By Mr. GOODLATTE:

H.R. 2605.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

By Mr. COLE:

H.R. 2606.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article I, Section 8 which grants Congress the power to regulate Commerce with the Indian Tribes.

This bill is enacted pursuant to Article II, Section 2, Clause 2 in order the enforce treaties made between the United States and several Indian Tribes.

By Mr. CURBELO of Florida:

H.R. 2607.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, clause 3

By Mr. FOSTER:

H.R. 2608.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clauses 1 and 3

By Mr. GRAVES of Missouri:

H.R. 2609.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3

''Congress shall have the power to regulate commerce with foreign nations, and among the several states, and with the Indian Tribes''

The management of the Missouri river by the Army Corps of Engineers directly impacts commerce. The river is a source of barge traffic carrying a variety of goods.

By Mr. HASTINGS:

H.R. 2610.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Constitution Article I Section 8

By Mr. HILL:

H.R. 2611.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. LEWIS of Georgia:

H.R. 2612.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I of the United States Constitution and its subsequent amendments, and further clarified and interpreted by the Supreme Court of the United States.

By Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS:

H.R. 2613.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2

The Congress shall have Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States; and nothing in this Constitution shall be so construed as to Prejudice any Claims of the United States, or of any particular State.

By Mr. MCNERNEY:

H.R. 2614.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. PALAZZO:

H.R. 2615.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article IV, Sec. 3, Clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States.)

By Mr. SCHRADER:

H.R. 2616.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. art. 1, §8, cl. 12;

U.S. Const. art. 1, §8, cl. 14;

U.S. Const. art. 1, §8, cl. 16;

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 10: Mrs. LOVE, Mr. TIPTON, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. POSEY, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. THORNBERRY, Mr. STIVERS, Mr. MACARTHUR, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. SMITH of Nebraska, Mr. ESTES of Kansas, Mr. EMMER, and Mr. KING of New York.

H.R. 36: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan.

H.R. 37: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan and Mr. WILLIAMS.

H.R. 179: Ms. BASS.

H.R. 242: Mr. SHERMAN and Ms. PINGREE.

H.R. 350: Mr. GALLAGHER.

H.R. 390: Mr. CARTER of Georgia and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 411: Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. KIHUEN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Ms. ROSEN.

H.R. 468: Mr. ROUZER and Mr. GRIJALVA.

H.R. 490: Mr. ALLEN, Mr. ROE of Tennessee, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, and Mr. ROGERS of Alabama.

H.R. 519: Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 535: Mr. BIGGS.

H.R. 564: Mr. BERGMAN.

H.R. 592: Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. SOTO, Mr. CONAWAY, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, and Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana.

H.R. 624: Mr. FASO and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 649: Mr. RUSSELL.

H.R. 671: Mr. MCNERNEY.

H.R. 676: Mr. CROWLEY.

H.R. 681: Mrs. HARTZLER.

H.R. 712: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 738: Mr. PETERSON.

H.R. 747: Mr. COHEN, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. BOST, and Mr. LAHOOD.

H.R. 750: Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 757: Mr. COURTNEY.

H.R. 770: Mr. LANGEVIN.

H.R. 799: Mr. COHEN, Mr. HURD, and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 807: Mr. GOSAR and Mr. BOST.

H.R. 821: Mr. TAKANO and Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 849: Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. ROBY, Mr. KINZINGER, Mr. HOLDING, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. CRAWFORD, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, and Ms. STEFANIK.

H.R. 943: Mr. MAST.

H.R. 1006: Ms. MATSUI, Mr. MICHAEL F. DOYLE of Pennsylvania, and Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 1017: Mr. RYAN of Ohio, Mr. REICHERT, Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico, Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER, Mr. MCCAUL, Mr. BUCHANAN, and Mr. KINZINGER.

H.R. 1057: Ms. ROSEN, Mr. BYRNE, Mr. SMITH of Missouri, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. GIBBS, and Ms. FOXX.

H.R. 1098: Mr. POCAN.

H.R. 1104: Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 1144: Mr. RASKIN.

H.R. 1155: Mr. MOULTON.

H.R. 1164: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania, Mr. BACON, and Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 1167: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 1173: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. COOPER, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.

H.R. 1203: Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 1222: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 1226: Mr. LEVIN and Mrs. LOWEY.

H.R. 1245: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 1270: Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. KNIGHT, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. HIMES, and Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.R. 1289: Mr. YARMUTH.

H.R. 1314: Mr. GAETZ.

H.R. 1315: Mr. COLLINS of Georgia and Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 1316: Mr. ROUZER, Mr. ROGERS of Alabama, and Mr. CRAWFORD.

H.R. 1358: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1361: Mr. RUTHERFORD, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee, Mr. SWALWELL of California, and Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 1406: Mr. YODER and Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 1422: Mr. FITZPATRICK.

H.R. 1429: Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois.

H.R. 1447: Mr. CURBELO of Florida and Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.

H.R. 1456: Mr. CRIST.

H.R. 1562: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 1566: Mr. PETERS.

H.R. 1584: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 1587: Mr. HUFFMAN and Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1614: Ms. LOFGREN.

H.R. 1624: Ms. VELÁZQUEZ and Mr. DELANEY.

H.R. 1626: Mr. BACON, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, and Ms. DELBENE.

H.R. 1661: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.

H.R. 1684: Mr. SANFORD.

H.R. 1697: Mr. GAETZ, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. AGUILAR, Mr. WOODALL, Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida, and Mr. FLEISCHMANN.

H.R. 1711: Ms. GABBARD.

H.R. 1727: Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 1730: Mr. JEFFRIES and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.

H.R. 1731: Mr. FLEISCHMANN.

H.R. 1733: Mr. BUCSHON.

H.R. 1784: Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. RASKIN, Mrs. BEATTY, and Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 1811: Mr. BERGMAN and Mr. LIPINSKI.

H.R. 1820: Ms. ROSEN.

H.R. 1840: Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 1853: Mr. SOTO.

H.R. 1854: Mr. KNIGHT.

H.R. 1895: Mrs. ROBY.

H.R. 1904: Mr. WOMACK.

H.R. 1909: Mr. SMITH of Washington.

H.R. 1911: Mrs. WALORSKI, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. HULTGREN, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mr. ZELDIN, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.

H.R. 1974: Mr. ELLISON.

H.R. 1989: Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. KNIGHT, and Mr. YOHO.

H.R. 1993: Ms. FUDGE.
H.R. 1997: Mr. CICILLINE.
H.R. 2013: Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 2029: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 2045: Ms. TSONGAS.
H.R. 2052: Mr. CICILLINE, Mrs. DINGELL, Mr. HASTINGS, and Mr. VALADAO.
H.R. 2079: Mr. LOWENTHAL.
H.R. 2083: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.
H.R. 2134: Mr. LONG.
H.R. 2147: Mr. PETERS.
H.R. 2150: Mr. NOLAN, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. WELCH, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. VISCLOSKY, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. POLIS, Mr. PETERS, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. BARRAGÁN, Mr. KILMER, Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire, and Ms. DELBENE.
H.R. 2164: Ms. SCHAKOWSKY.
H.R. 2181: Mrs. WALORSKI.
H.R. 2215: Ms. ROSEN.
H.R. 2240: Mr. BOST, Mr. REED, Mr. CRIST, and Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 2272: Mr. SOTO.
H.R. 2285: Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. HARPER, and Mr. ENGEL.
H.R. 2299: Mr. TONKO and Mr. GOSAR.
H.R. 2327: Mr. POSEY, Ms. SPEIER, Mr. SMUCKER, Mr. DESAULNIER, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. KATKO, Mr. SCHRADER, Mr. BISHOP of Michigan, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. PAULSEN, and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 2331: Mr. MEADOWS.
H.R. 2335: Mr. FARENTHOLD, Ms. NORTON, and Mr. MCGOVERN.
H.R. 2340: Ms. MCSALLY and Mr. KNIGHT.
H.R. 2353: Mr. BISHOP of Michigan and Mr. STIVERS.
H.R. 2358: Mr. PETERS and Mr. KHANNA.
H.R. 2360: Ms. ADAMS, Ms. BASS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mrs. DEMINGS, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H.R. 2372: Mr. WESTERMAN, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. WITTMAN.
H.R. 2392: Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.R. 2413: Mr. BEYER, Mr. POCAN, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. NORTON, Ms. MATSUI, Mr. TONKO, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.
H.R. 2414: Mr. MEEKS, Mr. BEYER, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. LEE, Mr. CLAY, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. SHEA-PORTER, and Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 2472: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 2473: Ms. BASS.
H.R. 2482: Mr. KATKO.
H.R. 2491: Mrs. DAVIS of California, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. CARBAJAL.
H.R. 2498: Mr. ELLISON.
H.R. 2500: Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN and Mr. O'HALLERAN.
H.R. 2509: Mr. BLUMENAUER.
H.R. 2512: Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ.
H.R. 2515: Ms. TITUS.
H.R. 2519: Mr. SOTO, Mr. ALLEN, and Mr. DELANEY.
H.R. 2527: Mr. TAKANO.
H.R. 2532: Mr. SENSENBRENNER.
H.R. 2545: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 2547: Mr. MASSIE.
H.R. 2556: Mr. MEEHAN.
H.R. 2561: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H.R. 2581: Mrs. BLACK, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. LAMBORN, and Mr. WILSON of South Carolina.
H.R. 2583: Mr. MCEACHIN, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. BLUMENAUER, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Texas.
H.R. 2586: Mr. JONES.
H.R. 2587: Mrs. BLACKBURN and Mr. RYAN of Ohio.
H.J. Res. 51: Mr. BYRNE, Mr. KINZINGER, Ms. GRANGER, and Mr. CRAWFORD.
H.J. Res. 53: Mr. HOYER.
H. Con. Res. 8: Mr. HARPER, Mr. SHIMKUS, and Mr. FLORES.
H. Con. Res. 45: Mr. PETERS, Mr. GALLAGHER, Mr. KATKO, and Mr. BYRNE.
H. Con. Res. 55: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.
H. Res. 15: Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H. Res. 30: Ms. PLASKETT.
H. Res. 31: Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. KILMER, and Ms. TSONGAS.
H. Res. 188: Ms. WILSON of Florida.
H. Res. 201: Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. STEWART, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. DIAZ-BALART, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey.
H. Res. 218: Mr. RUTHERFORD.
H. Res. 220: Ms. TSONGAS and Mr. CLAY.
H. Res. 239: Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. COFFMAN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. POE of Texas, and Ms. GABBARD.
H. Res. 259: Mr. GARRETT, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. HILL, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. WALKER, Mr. GALLAGHER, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.
H. Res. 276: Mr. ZELDIN,
H. Res. 285: Mr. TURNER.
H. Res. 314: Ms. ESHOO, Mr. CRIST, Mr. ELLISON, and Mr. ROE of Tennessee.
H. Res. 330: Mr. GROTHMAN.
H. Res. 336: Ms. TITUS, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. VELA, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. DONOVAN, and Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN.
H. Res. 346: Ms. KUSTER of New Hampshire.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, OR LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

Under clause 9 of rule XXI, lists or statements on congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits were submitted as follows:

The amendment offered by Representative SHEILA JACKSON LEE or a designee, to H.R. 1761 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits, as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

The amendment to be offered by Chairman GOODLATTE, or a designee, to H.R. 1973, the Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act, does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.

DELETION OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.J. Res. 13: Mr. BLUM.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 115th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 163 WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MAY 23, 2017 No. 89

Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, the fountain of every blessing, we praise You for Your loving kindness and tender mercies. We are astounded by Your wonderful works to the children of humanity. Lord, we are incomplete without You. Fill our thirst for the knowledge of the sacred with Your Divine wisdom.

Today, inspire our lawmakers to do Your will. May they bring love where there is hate, light where there is darkness, and hope where there is despair. Lord, use them to transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows and to bring harmony from disharmony. May they rejoice because of the blessing of sins forgiven, striving to glorify You in all they do.

And Lord, stay close to those affected by the bombing in Manchester, England.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The majority leader is recognized.

MANCHESTER ATTACK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, before I say anything else this morning, I want to say this: What we saw in Manchester last night almost defies description. It was, in the words of Prime Minister May, a ''callous terror attack'' that stood out ''for its appalling, sickening cowardice, deliberately targeting innocent, defenseless children and young people, who should have been enjoying one of the most memorable nights of their lives.''

Although we will continue to learn more about what happened, this much is very clear: Many have died, many more have been injured, and, as the Prime Minister told us, many of them were children. It is hard to imagine the pain the families of these victims must be feeling today. On behalf of the Senate and our country, let me express our heartfelt condolences to the victims, their families, and to the British people, who have been our friends and allies through many challenges.

The Senate also recognizes the many first responders, medical professionals, and citizens who stepped in to provide help.

As I speak, I know that the intelligence professionals from both of our countries are already working to discover whether this was the result of an individual attacker or directed by ISIL. In either case, the people of America will stand with our allies and provide any assistance we possibly can.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET AND TAX REFORM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as colleagues know, it is once again the time of the year when Congress gets to work putting together the next budget. One of the initial steps in the process is typically for the President to send up a blueprint of his own laying out his priorities, as Members continue to work through conversations here as well.

The President's budget is being released this morning, and here are a few things we should know about it already: It builds on the progress made earlier this month on defense, prioritizing more of the resources our servicemembers need. It builds on progress made earlier this month on border security, calling for investing in more of the infrastructure and technology our law enforcement officers actually need. And, unlike any of President Obama's budget blueprints, this one actually achieves balance.

The provisions I mentioned are encouraging to see. I am sure they will serve as guideposts for Chairman ENZI and the Budget Committee as they move forward on this matter.

I also appreciate the President's commitment to slowing the growth of mandatory spending, which, if left unaddressed, could eventually limit our ability to invest in nearly anything else as the debt—and the interest we have to pay on it—increases and crowds out spending on other major priorities.

This Thursday, Treasury Secretary Mnuchin will testify in front of the Finance Committee on the budget blueprint and, with it, the administration's interest in tax reform. I know we are all eager to learn more from him and look forward to working with the administration to make our Tax Code simpler and fairer for the American people and American businesses.

Over the years, our tax system has grown only more complex and more punitive, putting both individuals and employers at a disadvantage, while also inadvertently incentivizing American companies and jobs to leave this country to go overseas. It is evident that we need serious reforms to our Tax Code, the type that will help families keep more of their hard-earned money, while also helping businesses put more Americans to work.

By implementing tax reform, we can again encourage investment in our country, allowing American businesses to expand, hire more workers, improve wages, and offer better benefits. In turn, families will have access to more

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

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opportunities and will be better positioned to actually get ahead.

It has been over three decades since we passed comprehensive tax reform, and it is past time we do something about it. Fortunately, we now have an administration that shares this interest in finally improving our tax system instead of making it even more convoluted and constricting—and without demanding $1 trillion in new taxes for the government.

Easing the burden on the middle class and getting the economy moving again are top concerns here in the Republican Senate. We understand that for the past 8 years, too many families struggled under the weight of an economy that failed to reach its potential, too many took home wages that didn't meet their needs, and too many saw opportunity slip away. We understand that these families deserve a change in direction and expect each of us to do what we can to get the economy moving again soon. That is why we passed legislation to provide relief from Obama-era regulations that stifle growth, and it is why we will keep working to advance more legislative solutions to help hard-working Americans. Tax reform is one way we can do just that.

This is an area where Republicans and Democrats have been able to find some common ground in the past, and I am hopeful our friends across the aisle will join us in working toward comprehensive tax reform one more time. Either way, the Republican Senate remains committed to enacting tax reform so we can help encourage American investment, boost job creation, and promote wage growth all across our country.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Sullivan nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided in the usual form.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 54, Courtney Elwood to be General Counsel of the CIA.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Courtney Elwood, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Courtney Elwood, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mitch McConnell, John Barrasso, Mike Crapo, Jerry Moran, Michael B. Enzi, James M. Inhofe, Richard Burr, Roger F. Wicker, Pat Roberts, Shelley Moore Capito, Thom Tillis, Orrin G. Hatch, Marco Rubio, John Boozman, John Cornyn, John Hoeven, James E. Risch.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call with respect to the cloture motion be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Sullivan nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

If no one yields time, the time will be charged equally to the two sides.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

MANCHESTER ATTACK

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, the Senate's thoughts and prayers go out to everyone in Manchester, England. Such violence is particularly heartbreaking when it happens, as it did in Manchester, at a concert with so many young people there to enjoy.

We mourn the families of the victims of last night's terrorist attack. We hope the perpetrators are quickly found and brought to justice. I saw on TV a mother waiting, trying to email and text her daughter. She got no answer. She was wondering where her daughter was. It brought back the horrible memories for me after 9/11, the day after, when I went up there and saw hundreds of people holding up signs: ''Have you seen my wife Evelyn?'' ''Have you seen my son John,'' not knowing if they were alive or dead. Most of them ended up being dead.

We hope and pray that mother, and all the other mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters who are waiting for news that maybe their child, their relative, is alive, will find them alive. Our prayers go out to them.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. President, now, on another matter completely, last night, it was reported in the Washington Post that President Trump attempted to enlist the Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, and the Director of the National Security Agency, Admiral Rogers, in helping the administration push back against reports in the press about an investigation into the President's campaign and its potential ties to Russia.

According to the same reporting, White House staff may also have ''sounded out top intelligence officials about the possibility of intervening directly'' with the FBI and Mr. Comey to get them to drop the investigation into General Flynn.

If these reports are accurate, it is another piece of now-mounting evidence that this White House has no interest—no interest—in allowing the Russia investigation to proceed without partisan interference, and the White House seems to have little respect for the principles of the rule of law. We have not quite seen anything like it in a very long time.

Such allegations only reinforce the correctness of the decision to appoint Special Counsel Mueller to oversee the investigation and should strengthen our resolve to ensure that he is insulated from interference from this White House. Such allegations also strengthen, again, the need for an independent, nonpartisan FBI Director.

With all these reports of attempts to interfere with the investigation, we cannot have an FBI Director who has a political background, who doesn't seem right down the middle, who doesn't

seem to be a Director's Director, a prosecutor's prosecutor, an investigator's investigator. No politician or candidate with insufficient impartiality should be selected by the President or confirmed by the Senate. We Democrats will stand very strongly for that.

Given the almost daily reports about potential meddling and misconduct by this administration, Congress must exercise its oversight authority in order to keep this administration in check. Both the executive branch and the congressional investigations must proceed. This is not about politics or political advantage. When a foreign power, particularly an enemy of our country like Putin and Russia, tries to interfere in your elections—and will probably do it again in the future—we have to know everything that happened, who participated, and make sure it doesn't happen again.

If people who participated in it—if there are such people—get away with it this time, many more will do it next time. So this is an issue of national interest, national security, and even the future of our democracy. I remind colleagues that in our Constitution, the Founding Fathers worried about foreign interference in our government. When I read that in high school and again in college, I said: Well, that doesn't seem real. It is all too real today, showing both the wisdom of the Founding Fathers and the need for strong oversight.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. President, now, on the budget, today, the President will release his full budget for fiscal year 2018. From all indications, the Trump budget will seek deep cuts to programs that help the middle class and working America while providing more handouts to the rich. It will cut to the bone programs that help the elderly, the poor, while adding money for an unnecessary, ineffective border wall that continues to have bipartisan opposition.

To make all the math work, the Trump budget makes entirely unfounded assumptions about economic growth. In short, the Trump budget takes a sledgehammer to the middle class and the working poor, lavishes tax breaks on the wealthy, and imagines all of the deficit problems away with fantasy math. The Trump budget exists somewhere over the rainbow, where the dreams of Nick Mulvaney, PAUL RYAN, and the Koch brothers really do come true.

Of course, these dreams are a nightmare for the average working American. We expect the Trump budget will make deep cuts to the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control. Let me ask, How many people in America want to cut cancer research when it has done such good? Well, President Trump evidently does. It is his budget.

They kneecap research that develops new cures, damaging our ability to contain or prevent the outbreak of disease. We are all living longer and healthier, in part because of this research. We want to stop it, cut it back, so we can give tax breaks to wealthy people who, God bless them, are doing great already?

We expect the Trump budget will gash programs like Meals on Wheels. I even read in the paper this morning that the head of the Freedom Caucus said that even for him some of these cuts were too great. The SNAP benefits, making sure no kid goes to bed hungry in America—this is America. We have always done this. The Children's Health Insurance Program, cruelly ripping away the lifelines from Americans who need it the most, the children, the working poor, the elderly.

We expect the Trump budget will cut transportation funding, education funding, and programs that help students repay their student loan debt. One of the great problems in America, the debt on the backs—the burden on average kids getting out of college, middle-class kids, we are going to make it harder? What is going on here? What is going on in the White House with this kind of budget?

Our college kids, when they get out, they need to be able to live real good lives and not have this burden of debt on their shoulders which they are struggling under now. We are going to make it worse. We also—it is amazing but true. The Trump budget will break President Trump's promise to protect Social Security and Medicaid from cuts, both of these. He promised over and over again he would not cut Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.

Medicare was not cut here, but Medicaid is and Social Security is. On Social Security, the budget will cut Social Security disability benefits to many Americans who have earned them and paid for those benefits. You can say: Well, it doesn't cut old-age benefits for the elderly. Wait. If they get away with this, the elderly will be next on the chopping block because the goal, it seems, of this budget is to cut everything you can so you can give even more tax breaks to the wealthiest people—the Koch brothers type of thinking.

It will also seek hundreds of billions of dollars—additional cuts—in Medicaid. The budget cuts Medicaid on top of the cuts that were made in the House bill for TrumpCare. What will that do? Medicaid has become a middle-class program. For sixty percent of the people in nursing homes, Medicaid funds it.

What are we going to tell a couple with three kids? Say, they are 40 or 45. They have three kids. They are saving for college, they are struggling, but at least they know that mom or dad, who needs help, is in a nursing home. If this budget passes, that family is going to have a terrible choice: Take hundreds of dollars a month out of their own budget and give it to pay for the nursing home or find a place for mom and dad to live, maybe at home. Maybe there is no room in the house. It is awful. That is what they are doing.

What else will it hurt? Opioid addiction. Much of the progress we are trying to make on opioid addiction comes through Medicaid because they give treatment. We need law enforcement—I am a tough law enforcement guy; you know that—but we also need treatment. I have had fathers cry in my arms because their sons—in this case, it was both sons—were waiting online for treatment and died of an overdose. What a burden a parent has to live with. We should cut that and cut it to give more tax breaks to the rich? It is an America turned upside down—this budget.

How about rural areas? I represent New York State. It is known for its big city, New York City. We have other great cities upstate, but we also have the third largest rural population in America. So I am very familiar with rural America. In many of my counties in upstate New York—and this is true in rural counties throughout America—the largest employer is the rural hospital. That hospital is the only hospital around for miles and miles and miles if, God forbid, you have a stroke and you have to be rushed there to get better.

Well, go talk to our rural hospitals. These rural hospitals are the beating heart of our local economy, employing hundreds, sometimes even thousands, of people. Well, nearly one in three rural hospitals today is at risk of closure. It is more expensive to run a rural hospital. People in rural areas are entitled to the same healthcare, so that means buying all these fancy machines. In an urban area, those machines can run 24/7 and get the reimbursement back, but in a rural area they can't. There are not that many people, but they get some help.

The Trump cuts to Medicaid would cause a whole bunch of these rural hospitals to close and many more to lay off employees, hurting healthcare in rural America, and hurting jobs in rural America—places that need help.

The Trump budget on top of TrumpCare, which seeks more than $800 billion in cuts to Medicaid, would decimate healthcare options for rural Americans and pull the plug on many of these rural hospitals. Some of my colleagues will be talking more about that this morning.

When you add all of it up, the Trump budget is comic-book-villain bad. Just like comic books, it relies on a fantasy to make all the numbers work. It is the kind of budget you might expect from someone who is openly rooting for a government shutdown. Haven't we heard the President say that? It is the latest example of the President breaking his promises to working Americans. This budget breaks promise after promise after promise that the President made to what he called the forgotten America, the working men and women of America. He said that he would help them, and this budget goes directly against them.

In his speech to Congress, for instance, earlier this year the President

called education ''the civil rights issue of our time,'' but his budget guts vital school programs, our future, our kids. He said: ''Cures to illnesses that have always plagued us are not too much to hope,'' but his budget slashes funding at the NIH and CDC where they do this research. And he said: ''Save Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security without cuts. Have to do it,'' but his budget cuts Social Security disability insurance and ends Medicaid as we know it.

The Trump budget is one giant, brazen, broken promise to the working men and women of America. It completely abandons them. Fundamentally, this is a deeply unserious proposal that should roundly be rejected by both parties here in Congress. I am optimistic that is what will happen.

We should follow the same blueprint we did in the 2017 budget: Both Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate, in a bipartisan way, everyone compromised. We should get together, negotiate a serious proposal that maintains our commitments to the middle class and actually sets up our economy to grow.

We cannot let the President turn America inside out with his budget. We have to stand together, Democrats and Republicans, and reject it for the sake of middle-class and working Americans. The Trump budget hopefully will not see the light of day.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it was quite edifying to be sitting here listening to the Democratic leader speak this morning during the morning remarks, expressing his concern for healthcare, rural hospitals, and talking about his concerns about delivering healthcare to the poor. It is indeed ironic because at a time when ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act, is literally in meltdown with unaffordable premiums and deductibles, we are not seeing any help whatsoever from our Democratic colleagues. I would suggest, rather than rail against the President's budget, they ought to be engaged in a more constructive process of working with us to make sure we can deliver on the promise of affordable healthcare to all Americans.

Of course, there is the matter of the President's budget itself. I remember that President Obama's last budget got voted on here in the U.S. Senate. It got one vote—one vote. A President's budget is not binding on the Congress. The Congress passes a budget resolution, both houses, and we anticipate doing that again.

The President's budget is really a statement of the President's priorities. Frankly, there are some things in the President's proposed budget that I think are worthwhile—things like securing our border. At the end of the day, it is the job of Congress, though, to pass a budget that reflects the priorities of our country.

I think it is worth pointing out that several aspects of the President's budget are encouraging and a welcome change from the previous administration. For one, it balances in 10 years. I would love to have our Democratic colleagues express some concern for the fact that we continue to spend money we don't have and impose the burden of repaying that money someday on future generations. To me, that is one of the most immoral things we do in this country; we spend the money today, and we leave the debt to our children and grandchildren to pay that back, which they must at some point. So when the President proposes a budget that actually balances in 10 years, I think that is a good thing. What a welcome relief from a White House budget anchored around overspending and growing the size of government, which we have seen for the last 8 years.

The other thing the President's budget does is reverse the defense sequester. This is the artificial cap we put on defense spending.

Of all the things the Federal Government does, national security is the No. 1 job. You can't outsource that to anyone. It is our No. 1 responsibility to keep the country safe and to keep America strong. Under the Obama administration, there was a cap put in place that prevented increased military spending, and indeed we saw cuts to the military of about 20 percent during the Obama years.

One thing that President Trump has done, which I find a welcome sign, is to properly resource our military so we can better defend against increasing threats around the world. It is simply irresponsible for us to allow our men and women in the military to operate on slashed budgets and outdated equipment. They can't even train and be ready for the next fight. The best deterrent to war and the best assurance of peace is a strong America. The President's budget reflects a better understanding of the threat environment ahead, and for that I am grateful.

So rather than railing against the President's budget, which he knows will not be passed into law—because no President's budget ever becomes law; it is a proposal of the President's priorities. As I said, there is much to like among the President's priorities—balancing the budget, emphasizing national security spending, and the like. Ultimately, we will have to come up with a budget ourselves. So I find the Democratic leader's railing against the President's budget, which he knows will not become law as written, somewhat ironic.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. President, on another matter, I have the privilege of serving as the chairman of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration. It is a role I take seriously in light of the many challenges our Nation faces when it comes to security and trade along our southern border.

The Texas-Mexico border makes up more than 60 percent of the total U.S. southern border. That means Texas is at the epicenter of the national security conversation when it comes to border security and protecting communities that thrive on cross-border trade, not to mention the U.S. economy that reaps 5 million jobs as a result of binational trade with Mexico alone.

Later today, the subcommittee will have a chance to examine this important topic and consider ways that Congress can help the Trump administration make America safer and our borders stronger. In particular, I look forward to hearing from Chief Ron Vitiello, who is currently Acting Deputy Commissioner for Customs and Border Protection. He actually is the head Border Patrol agent for the Federal Government, a man who has spent many years on the frontlines and knows from experience the challenges that exist in securing the border.

Customs and Border Protection agents and officers face a range of challenges every day, working in some of the most inhospitable environments and remote locations, often without adequate resources or equipment. They work tirelessly to combat drug trafficking, arms smuggling, illegal immigration, and human trafficking, while simultaneously working to facilitate legitimate trade and travel between Mexico and the United States.

I spoke a little bit about this yesterday in light of NAFTA's importance to the Texas and U.S. economy. Texas is a first port of entry for many goods and many people coming from all over the world, and it takes a solid team of Customs and Border Patrol professionals and good leadership to manage the border and the many ports of entry along it. I am grateful to Chief Vitiello for his hard work and look forward to his testimony this afternoon.

This administration has made clear that securing the border is a top priority, and I agree with that. I am confident that with topnotch leaders like Secretary Kelly of the Department of Homeland Security and Attorney General Jeff Sessions, we will finally make real progress toward getting it done.

The appropriations bill that was recently signed into law included the largest increase for border security technologies and infrastructure improvement in more than a decade. Fortunately, the President's budget supports increased investment in border security and immigration enforcement, as well, including new infrastructure and technologies to help us achieve operational control of the southern border. This focus on border security is a welcome change from the previous administration, and I am glad we now have leaders who will take the need to achieve true border security seriously.

I have always said that border security ultimately is a matter of political will. The Obama administration didn't have it; the Trump administration does. With the political will and with the guidance of experts like Chief Vitiello and others who tell us exactly

what the Border Patrol needs in order to secure the border, I am confident of our ability to get it done.

I will just relate the conversation I had with the Chief of the Rio Grande Border Patrol sector, Chief Manny Padilla. Chief Padilla long served in the Border Patrol in many different places along the border.

Of course, the border is very different in San Diego than it is in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. For one thing, Texas has virtually all private property along the border and, of course, is separated by the Rio Grande River from Mexico.

What Chief Padilla has said to me, which I believe is absolutely the case, is that it takes three different things to secure the border. It takes infrastructure. You can call it fencing, like the Secure Fence Act that we passed a few years ago that almost all of our Democratic colleagues voted for. It takes things like levy walls, which we have in Hidalgo County and the Rio Grande Valley. But it also takes technology and personnel because we know that no piece of infrastructure alone is going to provide the security we need. But fundamentally we need to regain the people's trust and confidence that the Federal Government will carry out its primary responsibility to protect our citizens and defend our borders.

Border security is complex. It is multifaceted and requires an approach that includes air, sea, and land. That is why we need a multilayered approach to border security that includes infrastructure, like the President talks about frequently when he talks about the wall. It takes technology, and it takes the men and women in the Border Patrol who do the dangerous but important work of keeping our border secure and keeping our country safe.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, shortly we will be voting on cloture on the nomination of John Sullivan, the nominee to be Deputy Secretary of State, and as the ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I urge my colleagues to support the cloture motion and support the nomination of John Sullivan to be the next Deputy Secretary of State.

MANCHESTER ATTACK

Before I begin, I want to express that I strongly condemn yesterday's heartbreaking attack in Manchester. I want to express my sincere condolences to the families of those who lost loved ones, especially the innocent and defenseless children who were brutally killed. As a father and grandfather, I mourn with them, and I am praying for the recovery of the injured.

The United States stands in firm solidarity with our friends in the United Kingdom. The United States will provide the necessary assistance as British authorities work to bring those responsible to justice. I know I speak for all my colleagues in the Senate in our solidarity with our friends in the United Kingdom.

Mr. President, in regard to Mr. Sullivan's nomination to be Deputy Secretary of State, he is well qualified for that position. He served in the Justice Department and in the private practice of law. He served as Deputy General Counsel at the Department of Defense. He also has been involved in the Department of Commerce, where he was General Counsel and Deputy Secretary. He is well familiar with government. He served in public positions and also brings private experience as a lawyer to the position of Deputy Secretary of State.

I do want to point out—as I pointed out to Mr. Sullivan and as most members of our committee did—that he will find himself home alone for a period of time, in that the Trump administration has not submitted to Congress nominees for important positions at the Department of State. Yes, I have confidence in the career people at the Department of State, but there are times that we have to have a confirmed person in control in order to advance policies. So it is important—from embassy security, to fighting terrorism, to helping with the humanitarian challenges we have around the world and the administration of our missions in all the countries around the world—that we have a team in place. The Trump administration has been slow in providing us with qualified individuals to fill these positions. Thus far, the administration has decided to treat the State Department as an inconvenience rather than as a critical national security asset.

Secondly, I want to express my concern about something that will make Mr. Sullivan's job a lot more difficult—the international affairs budget for fiscal year 2018 that the administration is unveiling today. Although we are still receiving details, as I look at the massive spending cuts to vital national security, it is impossible to conclude this is anything but an ''America alone'' budget—one that, if enacted, will have disastrous effects on our standing in the world.

Let me repeat one more time that the money we spend on development assistance, on diplomacy, and that we spend in regard to helping our allies around the world and countries around the world is part of our national security budget. It is part of our national security budget, and yet the President's fiscal year 2018 budget would compromise national security.

As Secretary Mattis has said—often quoted on this floor—if you don't give the Secretary of State and the State Department the resources they need, you better be prepared to give them more ammunition and more soldiers because it is going to be more costly for them to defend.

It is very disappointing that the budget slashes critical support to our allies in their efforts to defeat terrorism, including zeroing out counter-insurgency support in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan. It will slash funds to support the defense needs of countless foreign partner countries and offer them the unpalatable option of going into debt to the United States to get the defense equipment and support they need. This is certain to damage our security, counterterrorism, and security interests with these countries and prove a golden opportunity for Russia and China to take the place of the United States. This is serious business. If we don't help countries that are part of our coalition against terrorism, if we don't give them the resources to help us, then, quite clearly, our enemies will move in. As we know, Russia has done many things against U.S. interests. The voids will be quickly picked up by Russia and China.

This is a budget proposal that cuts support to European allies to counter Russia's aggression—precisely when Russia's assault on our democracy and the democracies of our European democracies has reached a fever pitch. At a time when the United States should be standing up for our allies and partners in Europe, this budget zeros out the Assistance for Europe, Eurasia and Central Asia—AEECA—account and eliminates the European Reassurance Initiative altogether. This was an initiative that was set up to counter Russia's influence in Europe, and we are going to zero that out?

This is a budget proposal that walks away from the promotion of democratic values. It slashes funding for human rights and democracy programs abroad and hollows out the ideas, initiatives, and institutions on which U.S. leadership and international order rests, like the United Nations Peacekeeping.

In his remarks in Saudi Arabia this past weekend, President Trump applauded Jordan, Turkey, and Lebanon for their role in hosting refugees. Yet draconian humanitarian funding cuts would harm these very friends and allies who are hosting millions of refugees. What an inconsistent message. It also eliminates the U.N. emergency food aid program at a time of famine in Africa and the Middle East. If these budget cuts are implemented, many people around the world will die as a result of diminished resources and support that would result. We can't let that happen.

It is a budget proposal that undermines our ability to deal with pressing national security challenges, including development assistance, humanitarian aid, and climate change. The administration's budget proposal slashes more than 30 percent from our foreign assistance budget and dramatically cuts support for critical programs to save the lives of mothers in childbirth, feed hungry children, educate young people, train farmers, and the like. These programs exemplify U.S. values and promote the power of democracy and the importance of protecting human rights.

America's trademark is its values, what we stand for, our leadership globally, and this budget would compromise our ability to promote American values.

This is a penny wise, pound foolish budget, as the security challenges that will grow from these humanitarian catastrophes will dwarf the cost of helping to address the challenges before they metastasize into failed states and havens for extremism. If we don't help, we will have to pay on the other end.

When we fail to help countries provide the stability they need to take care of their population, they become a breeding ground for terrorists. We then have to respond with the use of our military, and it is much more costly. It costs people their lives.

Climate change—perhaps the most pressing national security challenge that faces the globe in the 21st century—receives less than just neglect; this is a budget that actively provides a catastrophic effect on climate-induced instability. We will not be able to respond to our international obligations in regard to climate change.

I understand that for Mr. Sullivan, if confirmed, this is the budget proposal he has to accept and defend; however, both he and Secretary Tillerson should be put on notice that I—and I think I speak for a number of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—consider this budget dead on arrival. I would call on him to consider how, if confirmed, he will work with the Senate to develop a more serious budget proposal over the coming months that safeguards and promotes American interests in the world, that deepens our partnerships and alliances, that is sufficient to meet the challenges of an increasingly aggressive Russia and increasingly assertive China on the world stage, that provides our Nation the tools it needs to address the pressing humanitarian crises and challenges, and that supports and defends our universal values in the best tradition of our Nation.

That is what we need to do as a Congress. We are the ones who will pass the budget. We are the ones who have the responsibility to make sure our budget speaks to our priorities, our values, and our national interests. Yet it is very disappointing to see the President of the United States submit a budget that is just the opposite of what it should be in regard to putting money toward American values and national security. We will be looking upon Mr. Sullivan, if he is confirmed, to work with us so we can develop a budget that really speaks to American values and American interests.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State.

Mitch McConnell, Cory Gardner, Tom Cotton, Roy Blunt, Jeff Flake, John Cornyn, John Barrasso, Ron Johnson, James E. Risch, Joni Ernst, John Thune, Mike Rounds, Orrin G. Hatch, Bob Corker, David Perdue, John Hoeven, James M. Inhofe.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FLAKE). By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 93, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 134 Ex.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Flake	Murray
Baldwin	Franken	Nelson
Barrasso	Gardner	Paul
Bennet	Graham	Perdue
Blumenthal	Grassley	Peters
Blunt	Hassan	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Reed
Brown	Heinrich	Risch
Burr	Heitkamp	Roberts
Cantwell	Heller	Rounds
Capito	Hirono	Rubio
Cardin	Hoeven	Sasse
Carper	Inhofe	Schatz
Casey	Johnson	Schumer
Cassidy	Kaine	Scott
Cochran	Kennedy	Shaheen
Collins	King	Shelby
Coons	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Corker	Lankford	Strange
Cornyn	Leahy	Sullivan
Cortez Masto	Lee	Tester
Cotton	Manchin	Thune
Crapo	Markey	Tillis
Cruz	McCain	Toomey
Daines	McCaskill	Udall
Donnelly	McConnell	Van Hollen
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Enzi	Merkley	Whitehouse
Ernst	Moran	Wicker
Feinstein	Murkowski	Wyden
Fischer	Murphy	Young

NAYS—6

Booker	Gillibrand	Sanders
Duckworth	Harris	Warren

NOT VOTING—1

Isakson

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 93, the nays are 6.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Utah.

THE INTERNET

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the Federal Communication Commission's welcome proposal to end utility-style regulation of the internet by reversing the 2015 open internet order.

Anyone who has followed the hyperbolic debate about net neutrality has likely heard that the FCC is moving to squelch competition, limit consumer choice, raise prices, and perhaps even destroy the internet. That is my favorite one. At least that is what some activists and crusading late-night comedians claim. But none of this is true—none of it.

Rather, the FCC is reviewing the light-touch regulatory environment that, from the outset, facilitated the kind of innovation that produced the internet and expanded internet access to millions of Americans over the course of many years.

In order to understand this complicated issue, we need to be honest about what led us to where we are today; that is, the FCC's 2015 open internet order. The Obama-era FCC claimed that its order implemented net neutrality, or the equal treatment of all data over the internet, but that isn't quite right. The actual change was far broader than that.

The FCC reclassified broadband internet access service as a title II telecommunication service, instead of a title I information service. That might sound like a small change, but this soundingly small—some might even say soundingly innocuous—change applied a whole host of New Deal era regulations that were meant to apply to monopolistic telephone companies, monopolistic utility companies, and they applied those to the internet.

It subjected 21st century technology to the same rules that governed rotary telephones in the 1930s. Why, then, did the FCC do this? It wasn't because a free and open internet was harming Americans. The activists and entertainers clamoring for more government control of the internet claimed that it was under attack by predatory internet service providers but, strangely enough, none of them actually provided evidence for that very serious assertion.

If you are going to make that claim, back it up, point to evidence. Instead, they speak about imaginary or hypothetical harms. The 400-page order uses words like "may," "could," "might," or "potentially" not just here and there, not just a few times but several hundred times. Nor did the FCC issue the open internet order because Congress told it to.

On the contrary, nearly 20 years ago, our colleague Senator WYDEN, along with then-Senator John Kerry and others, expressly argued against the drastic action that would later be taken by the FCC in 2015. After passing the bipartisan Telecommunications Act in 1996, this group of Senators affirmed

the internet's status as a free and open information service, stating that ''nothing in the 1996 Act or its legislative history suggests that Congress intended to alter the current classification of Internet and other information services or to expand traditional telephone regulation to new and advanced services.''

Finally, the FCC did not intervene because it had evidence of market failure. When the FCC issued its order, the internet was still an explosive source of growth and innovation throughout America and throughout the world—as it had been for decades—when greater and greater numbers of Americans gained access to the internet for the first time. Perhaps, because of this inconvenient fact, the FCC hardly considered the possible economic effects of its regulations. The FCC's chief economist at the time went so far as to say the rules were an ''economics-free zone.''

What the internet does need is regulatory certainty, which is why I recently introduced the Restoring Internet Freedom Act, along with several of my colleagues. This bill would fully repeal the FCC's 2015 internet takeover. More importantly, it would prevent the FCC from interfering with the internet in the future unless such actions were specifically authorized by Congress.

We shouldn't stop there. Instead of waiting for regulators and activists to find new excuses to restrict the internet, we should open it further to extend more choices to American consumers. In other words, we should ensure that Federal policy promotes competition.

As we know from experience, heavy-handed regulations like the FCC's order tend to favor large, deep-pocketed companies over startups that can't afford an army of lobbyists in Washington. Removing these regulatory barriers will allow upstart entrepreneurs to compete with incumbents for consumers' loyalty. Those consumers—ordinary Americans and their families—will benefit from the improved service and lower prices that this kind of competition inevitably creates.

Most American households currently have access to at least one internet service provider. Many have access to two or more, which might look like a competitive market exists for those households, but regulations can keep these different options from being adequate substitutes for one another.

The government restricts access to valuable resources that could be used for high-quality internet services. According to a 2012 report by the Obama administration, the Federal Government is sitting on upwards of 60 percent of the best radio spectrum, so-called ''beachfront'' spectrum, which could be put to use for commercial internet services like 5G wireless broadband.

Meanwhile, excessive permitting, licensing, and environmental impact regulations delayed broadband deployment over Federal and public lands, especially in the West.

Finally, the Office of Management and Budget found that private parties spend nearly $800 million each year to comply with FCC paperwork requirements. The bill for this ends up being paid entirely by ordinary American families.

Thankfully, my colleagues in the Senate have already identified many of these problems and have done work to address them. Senators KLOBUCHAR and DAINES have spent considerable time on policies to streamline broadband internet deployment through their ''dig-once'' proposals. Senator HELLER is a champion for reducing barriers for deploying broadband throughout the West. Senators THUNE and NELSON, the chairman and the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, have introduced measures in the past to free up radio spectrum held by Federal agencies and organizations.

These are just a few of the many thoughtful ideas to reduce barriers to entry and increase competition, which has the potential to improve quality and bring down prices. The bipartisan nature of these policies demonstrates a clear understanding that improvements can be made, and everyone should be able to agree that more competition is better for American consumers, especially those in rural or low-income housing.

Everyone should also be able to agree that consumers should be protected from unfair and deceptive business practices. Thankfully, the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission already enforce fair rules that protect Americans' enjoyment of a free and open internet.

The combination of competition and strong enforcement of antitrust and consumer protections provides the benefits of an innovative marketplace while avoiding problems that come from tired, anti-consumer, outdated regulations like title II and like the 2015 open internet order.

For the sake of American consumers and innovators—not for entrenched business interests—I hope to work with partners in the House, Senate, and the FCC to promote competition in the technology sector, including among internet service providers. If that means underperforming companies have to work a little harder for their customers, that is all the better, because the end result of lively competition is more investment and innovation by businesses, which translates into more choices and better service for consumers.

I encourage my colleagues, regardless of party or ideology, to work with me on this project. If they are truly interested in a better internet—not just government intrusion and control for its own sake—I am sure they can help me identify other barriers to entry to the information superhighway.

For now, a good start to ensure that American consumers and small businesses benefit from the internet is to repeal the FCC's 2015 internet takeover, enforce antitrust, unfair, and deceptive practice standards, and encourage competition among internet firms. Only then can we guarantee an internet that is free and open for everyone.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I also ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO BONNIE SEAMAN

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, today I wish to commend Bonnie Seaman, who has loyally served the people of Pennsylvania for more than 40 years, more recently as the director of constituent services for my Senate office. Bonnie has not only been a trusted member of my staff but a very close family friend.

Bonnie was born and raised on a turkey farm in Leck Kill, PA. She is the youngest of four children. She first began her public service career in county government at what was then known as the Northumberland County Mental Health and Mental Retardation Department, where she touched the lives of people in her community.

In pursuit of a college degree, Bonnie attended Indiana University of Pennsylvania and graduated cum laude with a degree in education. After graduation, she worked as a special education teacher.

Bonnie's passion for helping others steered her career to the Pennsylvania State Senate. While working in the Pennsylvania Senate, she was asked by her supervisor if she was interested in working on my father's transition team after he was elected Governor of Pennsylvania in 1986. This transition job offer was supposed to be temporary, but Bonnie would spend the next 30 years working in State government for both then-Governor Casey and then me, when I got to State government years later.

She worked as the Governor's executive assistant for 8 years, and of course she wore many hats, managing the Governor's staff, scheduling events, and resolving constituent issues, but her most important role was providing support to the Governor. Her dedication and loyalty earned her the respect of her fellow employees in the Governor's office as well as those she worked with outside of the office.

After working in Governor Casey's administration, Bonnie worked as well with my father on his autobiography entitled ''Fighting for Life.'' In his book he pays tribute to her as follows:

I could never have made it through this project without my executive assistant,

Bonnie Seaman. It's hard to think of any work I have done these past ten years without Bonnie. Another theme of this book is loyalty, and few people have taught me more about the trait than Bonnie. I am deeply indebted to her for the skill and good spirit she brings to our work right up to this day.

That was written more than 20 years ago—just about 22 years ago. Of course, I can say the same thing about Bonnie's work in the U.S. Senate. In 1996, when I was elected the State's auditor general, Bonnie was vital to, first, my transition team. Then she served as the director of the Office of the Auditor General for 8 years, where she oversaw day-to-day operations of my schedule and the management of staff. When I was elected State treasurer in 2004, Bonnie began work with the Treasury Department. Then, finally, when I was elected in 2006 to the Senate, I asked Bonnie to serve as director of constituent services. I knew that her dedication to public service and compassion for others would make her an excellent director. She led the office of constituent services for 10 years with distinction. With her gold standard professionalism, and unimpeachable ethics, she was a mentor to her staff and served as a shining example of quality public service. Through her work, Bonnie has touched the lives of over 60,000 Pennsylvania constituents.

On behalf of my family, as well as thousands of families across our Commonwealth, I express our gratitude to Bonnie Seaman for more than three decades of stellar public service. The building we worked in, in Harrisburg, has this inscription on the front of it, the finance building: ''All public service is a trust, given in faith and accepted in honor.'' Bonnie accepted the trust that was placed in her. She kept faith with taxpayers and brought honor to her work. I wish Bonnie well in her retirement as she travels with her husband Tom, attends yoga classes, and enjoys time with her family and friends.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

(The remarks of Mr. COTTON pertaining to the introduction of S. 1202 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mr. COTTON. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:31 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President pro tempore, the Senator from Utah.

INTERNATIONAL DATA PRIVACY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss international data privacy. This is a critically important issue that has become all the more important over the years as we become more sophisticated. It has become all the more pressing in recent months as a result of court decisions impacting law enforcement's ability to access electronic communications overseas.

I don't think it would surprise anyone to hear me say that our privacy laws have not kept pace with technological developments. The primary statute that governs law enforcement's ability to access electronic data, the Electronic Communications Privacy Act, or ECPA, was enacted over 30 years ago—long before most people had even heard of email or the internet. ECPA was drafted in a world in which electronic data was stored on personal computers or on servers located in offices or homes. It presumes a world where data is in one location and where in order to access data, a person simply goes to the relevant location and retrieves it. But that is not the world we live in, at least not today. Nowadays, much of our data is stored not on home or office computers but in the cloud, a network of remote servers spread throughout the world that allows us to access data from literally anywhere.

The rise of cloud and remote network computing has transformed the way companies and individuals store data. No longer is data stored on sites or in one discrete location; rather, data pertaining to a single individual or even to a single document may be stored at multiple sites, spread across countries or even across continents. This has created all sorts of complications for our laws.

ECPA requires law enforcement to obtain a warrant before it can access many types of electronic communications. It also prohibits disclosure to foreign entities. Warrants, however, traditionally have stopped at the water's edge. A judge here in Washington can issue a warrant authorizing law enforcement to search an office here in Washington but cannot issue a warrant for searches in London or Paris.

So what is law enforcement to do in a world of cloud computing where pieces of the same electronic document might be stored in Washington, London, and Paris?

One possibility is to say that as long as the data is accessible from the United States—that is, so long as you can retrieve it by logging on to a computer somewhere in the United States—that is all that matters; law enforcement can order its disclosure.

This sort of maximalist approach, however, brings with it a whole host of problems. To begin with, it pays scant attention to the laws and interests of other countries, including our closest allies. Other countries, it turns out, have data privacy laws of their own, and just like ECPA, sometimes these laws prohibit disclosure to foreign entities, including foreign law enforcement. So to say U.S. law enforcement can compel disclosure and data stored anywhere in the world so long as that data is accessible in the United States is really to say that U.S. law enforcement can override the laws of other countries.

More particularly, it is to say U.S. law enforcement can order individuals or companies that store data overseas to violate the privacy laws of other countries. This is unfair to service providers who may find themselves on the wrong side of the law no matter which side they choose and does little to help international relations. It also undermines trust, drives customers to foreign competitors, and undermines the privacy of U.S. citizens by emboldening other countries with less robust privacy regimes that similarly seek unlimited extra territorial access to data.

Another possibility is to say that if the data is stored in the United States, then law enforcement may access it, but if it is stored outside our borders, it is off limits.

This is essentially the current state of affairs following a decision last summer by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit that ECPA warrants do not reach data stored abroad. Under the Second Circuit's decision, U.S. law enforcement can use compulsory process to access data stored in the United States but must work through diplomatic channels to obtain data stored overseas.

This sort of domestic storage regime has the benefit of avoiding the conflict-of-laws problems I have just described, but it also has very real drawbacks.

To begin with, it impedes law enforcement's ability to solve and prevent crime in cases where the needed data is stored outside the United States, even when the creator of the data is an American, the service provider storing the data is an American, and the crime being investigated took place here in the United States. The mere happenstance that the data is stored beyond our borders, even though it may constantly or instantly be accessed from within our borders, places it off limits. Service providers' varying business practices in moving and holding data determine whether an investigation moves forward.

This sort of domestic storage regime also forces U.S. law enforcement to work through diplomatic channels, which sometimes are slow and sometimes very cumbersome and in many instances less protective of privacy than U.S. criminal process, which requires a warrant from a neutral magistrate and a finding of probable cause.

The upshot is that neither of these regimes is satisfactory. A maximalist regime that extends U.S. law enforcement jurisdiction worldwide creates serious conflict-of-law problems and places U.S. service providers in impossible positions. A more modest domestic storage regime, by contrast, hinders law enforcement's ability to solve crime and protect us from harm, based solely on where a particular document or piece of data happens to be stored at a given moment in time.

What we need is a sensible regime with clear rules that determine access based on factors that actually matter to the person whose data is being sought. Privacy laws are meant to protect people, not abstractions. We ought not get bogged down with mindless formalism. Most people could care less whether their data is stored at site A or site B or country A or country B as long as it is easily accessible and has robust privacy protections.

At the same time, we need to take proper account of the laws and interests of other countries, especially our allies. We ought to avoid, where possible, trampling on other nations' sovereignty or ignoring their own citizens' legitimate claims to privacy, whether here in the United States or abroad.

For this reason, I believe the right approach to international data privacy is to ground the analysis on the location of the person whose data is being sought. It is, after all, the person who has rights and the person whose interests are devalued when data is obtained without proper process.

Accordingly, I have proposed legislation called the International Communications Privacy Act, or ICPA, that sets clear rules for when and how U.S. law enforcement can access electronic data based on the location and nationality of the person whose data is being sought. I intend to introduce an updated version of this legislation in the very near future.

Here is what the updated version of this legislation will say: If a person is a U.S. national or located in the United States, then law enforcement may compel disclosure no matter where the data is stored, provided the data is accessible from a U.S. computer and law enforcement uses proper criminal process. If a person is not a U.S. national, however, and is not located in the United States, then different rules apply.

These rules are founded on three principles: respect, comity, and reciprocity.

First, respect. If U.S. law enforcement wishes to access data belonging to a non-U.S. national located outside the United States, then law enforcement must notify the person's country of citizenship and provide that country an opportunity to object to the disclosure. This protocol shows respect to the other country and gives the country an opportunity to assert the privacy rights of its citizen.

Second, comity. If, after receiving notice, the other country lodges an objection, the U.S. court undertakes a comity analysis to determine whose interests should rightfully prevail—the U.S. interests in obtaining the data or the foreign interests in preventing disclosure. As part of this analysis, the court can consider such factors as the location of the crime, the seriousness of the crime, the importance of the data to the investigation, and the possibility of accessing the data through other means. This analysis prevents an obstinate foreign power from impeding investigations without good reason or where the U.S. interests in disclosure are particularly strong.

Third, reciprocity. In order to receive notice and an opportunity to object, the other country must provide reciprocal notice-and-objection rights to the United States. The country must also provide robust privacy protections within its own borders and satisfy international human rights standards. These requirements ensure that the U.S. provides its own citizens an equal or greater level of protection against foreign requests for data. They also offer incentives to foreign governments to properly safeguard the data of U.S. citizens within their jurisdiction.

Tomorrow, the Senate Judiciary Committee Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism will hold a hearing on law enforcement access to data stored abroad. That hearing, I hope, will elucidate many of the principles I just described.

Soon after the hearing, I will reintroduce the International Communications Privacy Act. The bill as reintroduced will incorporate feedback from law enforcement and privacy groups. I intend to push very hard for this legislation and will seek every opportunity to do so. I want my colleagues to know that I will be pursuing any and all legislative vehicles to get it across the finish line.

In the words of Utah businessman Jeff Hadfield, writing in the Deseret News, ''It's imperative that Congress quickly address the ambiguity within our current law. As every company becomes a software company, we need legislation that supports our companies' ability to store data overseas, protects our individual privacy rights, and helps U.S. law enforcement do its important job.'' I could not agree more.

The International Communications Privacy Act provides critical guidance to law enforcement, while respecting the laws and interests of our allies. It brings a set of simple, straightforward rules to a chaotic area of law and creates an example for other countries to follow. It is a balanced approach and a smart approach, and it deserves this body's full support.

Mr. President, on another matter, I wish to register my strong support today for the confirmation of John Sullivan to be Deputy Secretary of State.

The nomination of John Sullivan is another example of President Trump choosing the best and brightest for national security positions in his administration.

I have known John Sullivan since he was confirmed as Deputy Secretary of Commerce during the George Bush administration. He excelled in this position, which bears many similarities to the Deputy Secretary of State role to which he has been nominated.

For example, as Deputy Secretary of Commerce, John was responsible for the day-to-day operations and management of a major Federal agency. As Deputy Secretary of State, he will assume the same managerial duties, but for a different Federal agency.

In facilitating international trade agreements at the Department of Commerce, John Sullivan also honed his negotiating abilities, developing a diplomatic skill set that will be critical in his new role at the State Department.

As the chairman of the Finance Committee, I closely followed John's tenure at Commerce. I was consistently impressed with his ability to promote American interests abroad while maintaining constructive relations with our trading partners. I have no doubt that he will continue to serve our Nation well as the Deputy Secretary of State.

In addition to his management expertise, John Sullivan is a practicing attorney with the law firm of Mayer Brown LLP. There, too, he has developed a reputation for excellence, especially in the area of national security law.

In John Sullivan we have a proven manager, a seasoned diplomat, and a sharp policy mind who will bring strong leadership to the State Department. In John Sullivan, President Trump and Secretary Tillerson have made an inspired choice.

Secretary Tillerson is doing a tremendous job at the State Department. With John Sullivan as his Deputy, even more can be accomplished.

In addition, I would like to thank John Sullivan for his willingness to serve. Of course, I would be remiss if I did not also thank his family—especially his wife of 29 years, Grace Rodriguez, who has provided invaluable support to John throughout his public service. It is unlikely John would be here today without their consent and their constant support.

Few have the skills that John Sullivan possesses. Fewer still possess the patriotism, professionalism, and integrity he has displayed over a distinguished career. He is the best man for the job, which is why I urge my colleagues to confirm him without delay.

I appreciate this opportunity to make these points on the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, today many of my colleagues will come to the floor to speak about the devastating impact that TrumpCare will have on rural communities. I rise to join them in speaking on this topic and on the many other serious flaws in the Republicans' bill to replace ObamaCare.

When he was elected, President Trump promised he would provide healthcare for everyone, but President Trump and our Republican friends have turned their backs on that promise. The Republican healthcare proposal would put insurance companies back in the driver's seat, and that means less quality and more costs for all of us. Rural communities, working families, and people with medical conditions would be hit the hardest.

Today, we got a taste of how devastating TrumpCare would be. The President's budget proposal slashes billions of dollars for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. President Trump takes direct aim at bipartisan programs that have made historic progress for kids, for the disabled, and for the elderly.

Former Senator Hubert Humphrey once said: ''The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.''

When Senator Humphrey spoke those words, he had been diagnosed with terminal cancer. He died a few months later. His words are just as meaningful today.

TrumpCare fails Senator Humphrey's moral test. It doesn't cover more people or more services or improve healthcare. It raises costs and reduces quality. Compared to the ACA—or ObamaCare—TrumpCare would be a disaster for families in my home State.

In New Mexico, tens of thousands of people have healthcare, thanks to ObamaCare and the Medicaid expansion. Before the Affordable Care Act, New Mexico had one of the highest rates of uninsured in the country. It was almost 20 percent, at 19.6 percent. That rate has been cut in half to 8.9 percent.

Approximately 300,000 more New Mexicans now have healthcare. And each one of these 300,000 people has a story about how having healthcare has made a difference—even saved lives.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, hundreds of thousands of New Mexicans now have essential health benefits, including doctor visits, hospital care, prescription drugs, pregnancy and childbirth, and mental health services, and a range of preventive services, like mammograms and other cancer screenings, are available at no cost.

I am not saying that the ACA is perfect. Premiums are still too high, deductibles are increasing too much, and we still must bring down the cost of prescription drugs. We absolutely need to work to bring down costs. But, on balance, the Affordable Care Act passes all tests—many with flying colors. TrumpCare does not come close. TrumpCare gets an F.

Test No. 1: Does TrumpCare increase the number of Americans who will have healthcare? No, it decreases coverage and decreases it dramatically.

According to the most recent figures from the CBO, 24 million Americans will lose healthcare coverage under TrumpCare over the next decade. TrumpCare would dismantle the Medicaid expansion provisions that help so many working Americans, including 265,000 people in New Mexico, and TrumpCare would hit rural communities the hardest.

The National Rural Health Association has said that TrumpCare ''does nothing to improve the health care crisis in rural America, and will lead to poorer rural health outcomes, more uninsured and an increase in the rural hospital closure crisis.''

Rural areas like the ones we have in New Mexico have more elderly and disabled people, and fewer people have insurance through their jobs. TrumpCare is the hardest on these groups.

Rural hospitals are already struggling. They will have an even harder time keeping their doors open.

Many New Mexicans would have to drive an hour or more if their local hospital closed. And not only would closed hospitals mean less access to healthcare, it would also hurt the economy. In rural areas, hospitals are a big employer. If they close, the rural economy takes a hit too.

The administrator of the Guadalupe County Hospital in New Mexico, a fine woman by the name of Christina Campos, fears what might happen if TrumpCare becomes law. She is urging me to protect access to care in rural areas.

Guadalupe County is one of our smallest counties by population. The hospital's uninsured payer rate declined from 14 percent to 4 percent from 2014 to 2016, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, and its uncompensated care increased 23 percent in that same period.

I can tell my colleagues that I will fight tooth and nail to keep residents in our rural areas insured and to keep rural hospitals in New Mexico open.

Test No. 2: Does TrumpCare increase coverage of healthcare services? No, it fails this test too. Under the ACA, insurance companies must cover essential healthcare services, period. But under TrumpCare, starting in 2020, States can get a waiver and define their own essential benefits for individual and small group plans. So States would be able to cut the benefits that people count on—and that are making patients healthier.

Test No. 3: Does TrumpCare make healthcare more affordable? It doesn't. It takes aim at the most vulnerable working and low-income families and seniors—the people most in need of care—and it cuts access to healthcare out from under them. If you are older and poorer, you lose big under TrumpCare. If you are young and wealthy, you win.

What is wrong with this picture? What is wrong is that it is unjust. And it is bad for healthcare costs over the long run. Trump and the Republicans are proposing drastic changes to our healthcare system—and they are changes for the worse. They want to go backward to a time when insurance companies could decide who gets healthcare and who doesn't.

Finally, TrumpCare would hurt anyone with a preexisting condition. One of the most popular provisions of ObamaCare is that it prohibits insurance companies from dropping you if you get sick and from refusing to cover you because of a preexisting condition. A preexisting condition could be something serious like cancer, but insurance companies have considered everything from childbirth to hand warts a preexisting condition.

Under TrumpCare, States would be able to decide whether to get a waiver from those patient protections. And then we would go back to that time when insurance companies decided who could get healthcare and who couldn't. States would have to set up high-risk pools to provide people with the option of insurance in catastrophic situations. But in the best cases, high-risk pools wouldn't protect many people from going bankrupt just to get healthcare, and TrumpCare wouldn't provide nearly enough funding for States to run them successfully.

Take Alexis from Albuquerque. Alexis is here in the photograph with her husband. Alexis had a stroke and brain surgeries when she was 28 years old. Even though she had no lingering effects, she was denied insurance in the private market and had to get insurance in New Mexico's high-risk pool. According to Alexis, ''It broke us financially.'' Alexis now has affordable health insurance with the help of the Affordable Care Act subsidies. Like most people, she doesn't want to risk going broke just to get healthcare. She shouldn't have to.

Finally, I want to tell you about a 1-year-old from Albuquerque, NM, whose name is Rafe. Rafe was born with cortical visual impairment—a kind of legal blindness—and significant developmental delays. His parents—Jessica, his mom, and his father, Sam, a veteran—have been able to access the intensive medical care, early intervention services, medical equipment, and therapy he needs through a combination of the military's insurance and Medicaid. But TrumpCare jeopardizes Medicaid by turning it into a block grant for States, which will most certainly result in deep cuts to Medicaid. It threatens Rafe's chances of a better life.

The President promised he would keep protections for people with preexisting conditions—people who are sick. His broken promises can hurt tens of millions of Americans.

In the end, TrumpCare is not a real healthcare bill. It is a tax relief bill for the richest 1 percent. The CBO estimates that TrumpCare would cut taxes by $346 billion over 10 years, at the expense of the healthcare of working families and seniors.

Our priorities for healthcare reform should be increasing coverage, increasing the services provided, making people healthier, and providing affordable healthcare. I strongly and unequivocally support all Americans having healthcare.

Let's get to that goal, and let's get to that goal now. Ninety-one percent of the American people are insured, thanks to the steps taken under the Affordable Care Act. Rather than repealing it, let's build on its strengths so 100 percent of people can afford to see a doctor when they are sick. We can do this. We can do better. Let's ensure that Americans in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy, and the disabled, have the right to healthcare so that America meets the moral test of good governance.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, if there is one thing that has become clear, it is that the ObamaCare status quo is not sustainable.

Prices continue to soar while choices are rapidly dwindling. Between 2016 and 2017, the average premium for a midlevel ObamaCare plan on the Federal exchange went up 25 percent—25 percent for just 1 year. Let's remember that this is on top of years—year after year—of premium increases under ObamaCare.

How many families can easily absorb a 25-percent premium increase? I would submit that not many. Again, that is just for 1 year. ObamaCare rate hikes aren't going anywhere. Numbers for next year are starting to emerge, and they are not looking good. Connecticut's ObamaCare insurers are requesting average premium increases in the double digits. One Connecticut insurer has requested an average rate hike of 33.8 percent—33.8 percent. In Virginia, one insurer has requested an average rate increase of 38 percent. Another has requested an average 45-percent rate hike. In Maryland, average increases range anywhere from 18 percent to almost 59 percent. One insurer has requested a staggering 150-percent rate increase—150 percent.

Obviously, these kinds of price increases are unaffordable for most families, but ObamaCare isn't leaving them any options. Along with soaring prices, choices on the exchanges are rapidly dwindling. Roughly one-third of U.S. counties have just one choice of health insurer on their exchange for 2017. Several States—including Alabama, Oklahoma, Alaska, and Wyoming—have just one choice of insurer for their entire State, and things are only getting worse.

In 2018, a number of counties may lack an ObamaCare insurer at all. In February, health insurer Humana announced its decision to completely withdraw from the ObamaCare exchanges for 2018, and 2 weeks ago, Aetna, which had already sharply reduced its participation in the exchanges for 2017, announced its decision to fully exit and completely get out of the market in 2018. That leaves the Nebraska and Delaware ObamaCare exchanges with just one insurer for 2018.

UnitedHealthcare is leaving Virginia, and Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield is withdrawing from Iowa. In the wake of Aetna and Wellmark's decision, Medica, the last ObamaCare insurer for most of Iowa, announced it will likely leave the State in 2018. That would leave 94 out of 99 counties in Iowa with no ObamaCare insurer next year—all but five counties in the State of Iowa with no ObamaCare insurer. Iowa families with ObamaCare subsidies would have no place to spend them. As my colleague Senator ALEXANDER likes to point out, that is like having a bus ticket in a town where there are no buses running.

Dwindling healthcare choices aren't limited to the ObamaCare exchanges, either. Aetna is not only withdrawing from the exchanges. It is also withdrawing from the non-ObamaCare individual health insurance markets in several States. More than one insurance CEO has suggested that ObamaCare is in a death spiral, and I would have to say it is pretty hard to disagree. Combine soaring premiums with a steady insurer exodus, and sooner or later you get a partial or complete exchange collapse.

Then there are the other ObamaCare problems—like deductibles which are sometimes so high people can't afford to actually use their healthcare plans; or, narrow plan networks with few provider choices.

ObamaCare may have been well-intentioned, but good intentions don't make up for a lack of good policy—and ObamaCare was not good policy. ObamaCare took a healthcare system with problems and it made things worse. It is time to repeal this fatally flawed law and replace it with real healthcare reform.

Three weeks ago, the House of Representatives passed an ObamaCare repeal and replacement bill. The House's legislation repeals ObamaCare's tax increases, penalties, and mandates, and starts the process of restoring control of healthcare to States and individuals. My colleagues in the House have made a good start, and I am looking forward to building on their bill here in the United States Senate. We have a lot of Members with good healthcare ideas, and we are going to work hard to produce a bill that will start the process of giving the American people real healthcare reform.

ObamaCare is failing, and it is failing rapidly. Our Democrat colleagues need to stop pretending this law is ever going to do what it was supposed to do and come to the table to work with us on real healthcare reform. There is no question our healthcare system has problems, but ObamaCare is not, and it never has been, the solution.

Real reform is possible, though, and that is what we are focused on now here in the United States Senate—the kind of reform that will actually drive down prices, that will put patients and their doctors—not the government—in charge of healthcare decisions, that will empower States to embrace the solutions that are right for the citizens in their States and will give Americans more choices and real healthcare freedom.

That is the kind of healthcare reform Republicans are committed to delivering for the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HOEVEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MEDICAID

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk about the President's proposed budget as it relates to Medicaid and the fact that it is just a war on Medicaid; that is, it continues the wrongheaded ideas that have been proposed in the House bill on healthcare reform and takes that and continues to make cuts to Medicaid that are unsustainable for our healthcare system.

The President's budget would impose a block grant or per capita cap on States in 2020 in exchange for so-called flexibility. I haven't met one State administrator of healthcare in our State who says they need more flexibility. They have a lot of flexibility on Medicaid currently, but they know this is just a budget cap and a budget cut.

The budget would result in $610 billion in cuts to States, in addition to what would happen if they were successful in passing the House bill in the Senate. As the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities put it, the Trump budget cuts Medicaid ''considerably more deeply than the House bill's per capita cap proposal would do.''

No doubt what the budget is proposing from the President today and what our House colleagues have proposed on healthcare means more damage for healthcare and more damage for Medicaid.

Let's be more specific. Medicaid for healthcare is about children. It is about seniors. It is about the disabled. It is about working families. It is about young people. Medicaid covers half of the births and the majority of long-term care stays.

What people may not realize is that the President's budget cut to Medicaid also cuts children's healthcare, as a new study reveals, by at least $43 billion, according to Avalere Health. That is taking healthcare away from children, poor children, who need access to healthcare. Additionally, the budget impacts 1.75 million veterans who also get healthcare through Medicaid.

How can we possibly be standing here with a budget proposal by the President of the United States—after he promised not to cut Medicaid—that not only proposes to cut Medicaid but cuts childrens' and veterans' healthcare when they need it most?

Medicaid is a lifeline for people who can't get covered or can't get a fair deal. It is a highly cost-effective, dynamic, and innovative program that has worked well, and Medicaid is a winning economic strategy for how to help families get out of poverty. It is one of the most successful anti-poverty programs in the United States and the second largest program to combat extreme poverty.

Its expansion in Washington has helped create jobs indirectly and directly and has saved our State about $353 million in our State budget. It injects billions into the economy and supports our high-wage, high-skill jobs throughout the healthcare economy.

As we know, our colleagues, in the House draconian healthcare act, would for the first time cut Medicaid's successful program by introducing a cap that would result in reductions every year to the Medicaid Program. Regardless of who needs access, regardless of those children, regardless of those veterans, it would continue to push down Medicaid funds by more each year.

I have said to my colleagues in the House that there are far more innovative ways to help our healthcare delivery system that are cost-effective, but simply cutting veterans or families or children off of Medicaid is not the way to do it.

The President's budget released today would reinforce this permanent cap. Currently, Medicaid is a needs-based partnership between the States and the Federal Government. During economic recessions, natural disasters, or public health emergencies, States know they can count on the Federal Government.

Under what has been proposed in the House, the per capita cap would give States only a fixed amount and start reducing the amount of money each year. It would leave a tsunami of seniors and others without new technologies, prescription drugs, or tools to address new healthcare threats.

There is nothing about it that is reform. It is not innovation. It is simply a budget mechanism to cut Medicaid. I don't know how the President, given that he promised before not to cut Medicaid could do this. He said: ''I was the first & only potential GOP candidate to state there will be no cuts to Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid.''

If that is what the President tweeted, if that is what he said he was going to do, why is he now proposing a budget that actually cuts Medicaid?

We do not want to throw 600,000 Medicaid beneficiaries off of coverage in my State—and 14 million across the country—and take $1.4 billion out of Washington State's economy every year. These are numbers according to the Congressional Budget Office's most recent estimates and estimates by the State of Washington.

I think it is time to say no to the President's budget proposal. It is time to remind the President of his promise not to cut Medicaid, and it is time to stop talking about the silly idea of capping Medicaid and reducing funding to the States.

I mentioned the impact on children and veterans. I also want to mention the impact on those suffering from the opioid epidemic and what we have been trying to do to treat those individuals. Also, those facilities would be in great danger in continuing to treat that population if they don't have Medicaid.

So the notion that this is a smart healthcare strategy or a smart healthcare budget—it is not. It is a draconian measure that is going to leave many more Americans without healthcare. As I said, Medicaid is a successful program. The promise should be kept, and we should continue to improve the delivery system as a way to make it more cost-effective. I know we can't afford to leave sick children without access to healthcare, and now is not the time to leave veterans without the healthcare they deserve.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. STRANGE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. FRANKEN. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the healthcare bill the House of Representatives passed and is currently being considered behind closed doors by my Republican colleagues.

I travel around greater Minnesota all the time, and when the Republicans' healthcare plan first came out, I traveled to rural Minnesota to meet with rural hospitals, nursing home providers, and constituents to hear how this bill would impact their lives and communities. They are upset and they are frankly scared.

In Perham, MN, I heard from a woman who was in tears, not knowing where her mother would go if the Republican plan passed and she lost her nursing home coverage. This woman and her husband work full time, but together they cannot afford the around-the-clock care her mother needs.

Later, at a nursing home in Moorhead—that is in Minnesota across the river from Fargo—I also heard from a resident, Chrysann, who said this new plan wasn't about taking care of people but about ''survival of the fittest.'' The hospitals and nursing home administrators I met with said the financial blow they would receive would cause them to cut services and in some cases even close their doors.

What I heard, and the real panic that I saw, is a far cry from what President Trump promised this past January when he said: ''We're going to have insurance for everybody.'' He went on to say it would be ''much less expensive and much better.''

Versions of these promises keep coming from President Trump, his Cabinet, and from his allies in Congress—coverage for more people, at lower costs, with better quality. Those things all sound great, things that might help people like Chrysann, but the fact is, the Republican bill does the exact opposite. It takes coverage away from people, it drives up costs, and it makes coverage worse. In other words, the GOP is selling this healthcare bill on false pretenses.

Today I would like to explain how the Republican bill betrays each one of these three fundamental promises, and let's take them one by one. We can start by the number of people who will be covered. President Trump promised that everyone would have insurance, but an analysis of an earlier version of the healthcare bill—the first iteration of this, which is actually not as bad as this one—an earlier version analysis conducted by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office found that under current law the House Republican plan would leave 24 million fewer people with health insurance by 2026. That means by 2026, nearly 1 in 5 Americans under the age of 65 would be uninsured, compared to just over 1 in 10 today.

One particular way the Republican bill cuts coverage is by gutting Medicaid, a program that covers more than 60 percent of all nursing home residents nationwide, covers kids with disabilities, and benefits nearly 70 million Americans. The Republican plan ends Medicaid expansion. It fundamentally undermines the structure of the Medicaid Program and cuts the program's budget by as much as one-quarter over 10 years, a more than $800 billion cut.

On May 7, journalist Jake Tapper of CNN asked Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price whether the hundreds of billions of proposed cuts would result in millions of Americans not getting Medicaid. Secretary Price responded: ''Absolutely not.'' Well, that is absolutely false. When I say ''absolutely,'' I mean that literally.

It doesn't take an expert to know that if you take funding away from this program, which provides health coverage for millions of Americans, the program will suffer, and the human beings who rely on Medicaid will suffer as well. Specifically, according to the

Congressional Budget Office, 14 million of those 24 million people who will lose coverage under the Republican bill would lose their health insurance because of cuts to Medicaid. ''Absolutely not,'' says the Secretary of HHS.

It is bad enough to push a bill that will take away care from millions who need it; it is extra galling to be so fundamentally dishonest about it in the process. Look, the Affordable Care Act is far from perfect and we have problems that need to be fixed, but let's step back and review how far we have come because of the ACA. Since it came into effect, about 20 million Americans have gained health insurance coverage, producing the lowest uninsured rate in the history of this country.

In Minnesota, the number of uninsured dropped by nearly half, with people in rural areas seeing the largest gain in coverage. As a result, we have eliminated the gap in coverage between rural and urban Minnesotans. These coverage gains have increased access to vital health services, including access to treatment for mental illness and substance use disorders, but the Republican healthcare plan throws all of these gains into jeopardy, which is particularly troubling given that the country is still in the midst of battling a devastating opioid and heroin epidemic. Researchers estimate that 2.8 million Americans with substance use disorders will lose some or all of their insurance coverage under the ACA repeal.

Let's be clear. People will lose coverage as a result of the proposed Medicaid cuts; people will lose coverage because of the proposed insurance reforms; and tens of millions of more people will be uninsured and without care in the Republican plan than under current law.

Let's move on to the second point; the assertion that is repeated constantly by President Trump and by others that their bill brings down costs. In his Rose Garden celebration after the Republican health care bill passed the House—not after signing it into law but sort of an unprecedented Rose Garden celebration after merely the House passed the bill—President Trump said: ''As far as I am concerned your premiums they are going to start to come down.''

When Secretary Price was asked, again by Jake Tapper, if he stands by the President's statement, he responded: ''Absolutely.''

On an earlier date, Secretary Price actually said: ''Nobody will be worse off financially'' under the Republican plan.

This is just blatantly wrong. Republicans are actively sabotaging the individual market, needlessly driving up premiums in the short term, and in the long term what they are doing will result in exorbitant premium hikes for older, sicker people—so much so that CBO estimates some will eventually drop out of the market altogether.

Let me explain. For years, Republicans have taken deliberate steps to sabotage the individual market. First, Senator RUBIO ran through a last-minute change to the 2015 spending bill that undercut the Risk Corridor Program. The Risk Corridor Program, which was modeled after a similar program in the Medicare Part D Program, was included as part of the ACA to offset high costs incurred by insurers as they took on new enrollees in the early years of the ACA.

Here is how it worked. The Federal Government would make payments to health plans that enrolled a group of people who were sicker than expected and had higher healthcare costs than the insurer predicted when it set its premiums. On the flip side, the Federal Government would receive payments from health plans that enrolled a group of people who were healthier than expected and needed less care. By limiting losses incurred by insurers, the Risk Corridor Program was designed to help make premiums more affordable for individuals and families who bought coverage on the exchange. Senator RUBIO's provision undercut all of this. It severely curtailed the payments that could be made under the Risk Corridor Program, which meant that premiums soared and health insurers left the market.

For example, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota lost about $220 million between 2014 and 2016 under the weakened Risk Corridor Program, which the CEO told me in a meeting late last spring was a huge setback for the company. I was dismayed but not surprised when I heard, shortly after our meeting, that the company was leaving the individual market, which affected coverage for more than 100,000 Minnesotans and contributed to average premium increases of 36 to 67 percent in Minnesota's individual market in 2017.

Insurers across the country faced similar destabilizing losses, but that is not all. On top of that, for months, President Trump has been doing his part to sow uncertainty by repeatedly arguing that the individual market is in a death spiral. For example, on May 4, in response to Aetna's exit from the individual market in Virginia in 2018, President Trump shouted on Twitter: ''Death spiral!'' This is similar to his post on March 13 in which he said: ''ObamaCare is imploding. It's a disaster and 2017 will be the worst year yet, by far!'' But he is wrong.

Even the CBO noted in one of its scores that barring any significant changes, the individual market would probably be stable in most areas. This confirms what other research has found, which is that this year markets were starting to stabilize, which led Standard & Poor's to issue a report last December predicting that 2017 could see ''continued improvement, with more insurers getting close to break-even or better.''

But this didn't faze President Trump or any of the Republicans. Instead, they seem to have used these reports as a guidebook on what changes are necessary to actually cause the individual market to collapse. For example, President Trump has been playing games with payments that are due to insurance companies that reduce out-of-pocket costs for working families. On numerous occasions, he has threatened to stop these payments altogether, but in practice, he has been holding these payments hostage on a month-to-month basis to push forward other insidious reforms. Just yesterday, his administration announced that it would seek another short-term delay in the House's lawsuit, which aims to stop these payments permanently. These games are driving up the premiums for families and rattling health insurance markets.

Lastly, the administration has stopped enforcing the individual mandate. As a result, we are seeing enrollment in the individual markets stall for the first time since 2010, and if this results in younger, healthier people dropping their coverage, we could see prices rise dramatically for those left behind.

That is right. President Trump and the Republicans are actively attacking the insurance markets, causing premiums to go up. So if these markets falter and consumers suffer, it is because of what Republicans are doing right now and have been doing for years to undermine the individual market.

Still, you will often hear Republicans talk about the need to reduce costs. They even claim that their proposed healthcare plan would lower premiums in the long run. For millions of Americans, that is not true, but the reasons why it is untrue are slightly complicated. It goes to the CBO report for the Republican healthcare plan.

The March 13 CBO score says that average premiums for single people in the individual market would be 15 to 20 percent higher than under current law—than under the current ACA—in the first 2 years of its implementation. But it does say that they would be roughly 10 percent lower in 2026 under the House bill than they would be under current law.

At first blush, this sounds like prices would be coming down for people, right? That is certainly what the Republican leadership wants you to think. That day, House Speaker RYAN stated: ''This report confirms that the American Health Care Act will lower premiums and improve access to quality, affordable care.'' House Majority Leader KEVIN MCCARTHY got more specific. He said: ''After 10 years, premiums will be 10 percent lower than under ObamaCare.'' But Speaker RYAN and Majority Leader MCCARTHY are being deliberately misleading. One of the reasons that average costs go down is that the price for some people would go up so much that they couldn't afford any insurance at all. If the people facing the most expensive insurance

simply dropped out of the market, sure, average costs go down.

Here is how this works: Under the Republican plan, insurers would be able to charge older enrollees five times more than younger ones, which would dramatically increase premiums for people aged 50 to 64 years old while decreasing premiums for younger people. Meanwhile, the tax credits that help older Americans afford their premiums would be drastically slashed. The result is that, especially for older people of modest means, coverage would become unaffordable, so they disappear from the market. If only younger, healthier people can buy insurance, average premiums go down, but you have actually made the system much worse and much more expensive for the people who really need it.

But that is not all. The Republican plan would also allow States to waive crucial protections for patients with preexisting conditions, which means that in those States, we could go back to something like the old days when insurance companies could charge people with preexisting conditions much more—potentially as much as $25,000 more for their coverage, as estimated by the AARP.

Republicans are quick to point out that their bill maintains a requirement that insurance companies have to offer plans to everyone, but it abandons the principle that the plans must be affordable, and an unaffordable plan does people about as much good as no plan at all.

If you are young, if you have no preexisting condition, it might be true that your premiums will go down under the Republican plan. But for millions of Americans, though, if the Republican bill passes, insurance costs are going to go up. For many people, they will go up so high that they will be out of reach.

That brings me to the third claim the Republicans are peddling—that their plan will result in higher quality coverage. In fact, Republicans want to open the door to junk insurance.

In defending the House Republican plan, Secretary Price recently stated that the plan allows ''for every single person to get the access to the kind of coverage that they want.'' We have heard this before. This is a code for allowing insurers to offer garbage insurance plans that offer skimpy benefit packages and impose much higher deductibles and cost sharing on consumers.

Under the Affordable Care Act, you cannot sell junk plans on the insurance exchanges. Plans have to cover the essential health benefits. This is key. Under the ACA, plans have to cover the essential health benefits—10 key categories of benefits such as prescription drugs, maternity care, and mental health services. On top of that, the law prohibits insurers from imposing annual or lifetime limits on these essential health benefits. The goal is to make sure that when people get sick or if they have a preexisting condition, they don't go broke getting the care they need because of fine print in their health insurance plan.

The Republican bill would allow States to eliminate these essential health benefits. Consumers would be left with plans that leave them up a creek if they actually get sick. And plans for people who are sick—the price of those plans will go sky high. No one would call that ''better care,'' which is why Republicans aren't really being straight about it. What they call ''flexibility'' is actually just the removal of consumer protections.

To review, the Republican plan covers fewer people, costs too many people more—in many cases, much, much more—and provides worse coverage, and it is being sold by misleading people on each of these points.

It is not as though there aren't ways to cover more people, reduce costs, and provide better coverage. You could do a public option, for example. You could reduce prescription drug costs—an issue on which I recently introduced a comprehensive bill. You could improve coverage by increasing the number of healthcare providers in rural areas, as I proposed last year in my rural health bill. But the Republican plan does none of these things, which raises the question: What does it do? Why would anyone take the time to propose such a terrible bill? The answer is this: It gives a giant tax cut to the wealthy. That is the real point of this bill. It is not a healthcare bill; it is a ''take healthcare away from people who need it and use the money to give a tax break to the rich'' bill.

As Chrysann in Moorhead, MN, said, it is about ''survival of the fittest.''

The average tax savings for the 400 richest Americans under the Republican plan is $7 million each—again, $7 million each. For households earning $1 million or more a year, it is more than $50,000 apiece, each year. But for households earning $50,000 a year, which is about the median income in the United States, the tax cut is next to nothing, or you could even face a tax increase. There are tax cuts specifically for insurance company CEOs. There are tax cuts specifically for drug companies. There is nothing comparable for the middle class. And all of those tax cuts are paid for by cutting healthcare programs that keep people alive, by cutting off funding that lets seniors age with dignity, and by cutting services for kids with disabilities.

This bill would take us back in time and roll back our progress. It is up to us here in the Senate to stop that from happening. This bill is literally sickening. It is vicious, it is cruel, and it should never be passed into law. I urge my Republican colleagues to walk away from this cruel effort and work with us to actually improve healthcare for Americans. And I urge everyone considering this bill to be straight with the American people about exactly what it is that this bill will do to them.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, obviously, a big problem before the country right now is, What do we do about rising healthcare premiums?

What we know under the Affordable Care Act—or the un-Affordable Care Act—or ObamaCare, as some call it, is that premiums are rising more and more. One of President Trump's campaign pledges was that premiums would come down and, actually, come down with, as he said in one place, beautiful coverage—that it is actually good coverage and premiums are lower. So let's kind of set the stage.

I just got a message on my Facebook page. I will read it. By the way, anybody can post on our Facebook page these sorts of stories, if they are interested in them.

Brian from Louisiana sent a message saying: My family plan is $1700 a month for me, my wife, and two children—so roughly about $20,000 a year. The ACA, or the Affordable Care Act, has brought me to my knees. I hope you can get something done as my credit cards are all maxed out. And 80 percent of my friends are in the same situation. The middle class is dwindling away. Can everyone just come together and figure this out?

Think about this: $1,700 a month. He did not write this, but what would be standard for this sort of policy is a $13,000 family deductible.

I say that because I have an acquaintance in San Francisco. San Francisco is so expensive for housing, transportation, and food, and the premium for their young family is $20,000 a year, with each family member with their own separate $6,000 deductible. This is under the un-Affordable Care Act, as I call it, or the Affordable Care Act, as others do.

A friend of mine back in Baton Rouge, whom I have quoted many times, put this on my Facebook page because people would not believe it: He and his wife, 60 and 61, their quote for their insurance last year was $39,000. Their quote for their insurance was $39,000.

Then I spoke to a fellow who is an insurance consultant here in Washington, DC—an insurance consultant. If anyone can get their premiums down, it would be he. For his family, their premium is $24,000 a year with a $13,000 family deductible. If they get in a car wreck, their family will be out $37,000 before the insurance kicks in. Who can afford this? We must do something better.

When President Trump ran for office, President Trump clearly recognized this. On the campaign trail, he said over and over that he wished to lower premiums. It is the President's genius, if you will, that he knew how to do so. You do so by expanding the risk pool. He said he wanted to continue coverage for all.

He gets away from the ObamaCare mandates, which people hate. The American people don't like being told what to do.

He also said he would care for those with preexisting conditions. This is how it works. When you cover many, you have a bigger risk pool. Those with preexisting conditions have the cost of their illness spread out over the many. So premiums come down for all.

My hat is off to the President for coming up with that. In fact, 5 days before he was sworn in, he echoed this, because one way to lower premiums is to give poor coverage. One way to lower premiums is to give folks such terrible coverage that it doesn't cost anything. On the other hand, it doesn't cover anything. The President seems to know this.

Five days before he was inaugurated, he said to the Washington Post about people covered under his replacement for ObamaCare:

> [They] can expect to have great healthcare. It will be in a much simplified form. Much less expensive and much better.
>
> We're going to have insurance for everybody. There was a philosophy in some circles that if you can't pay for it, you don't get it. That's not going to happen with us.

I am a physician, a doctor. Again, I admire President Trump's insights. As a physician, I know that whoever wants healthcare gets healthcare. Twenty or so years ago, Congress said that if you walk into an emergency room, the emergency room has to take care of you. It doesn't matter if you are an American citizen. It doesn't matter how much it costs. The hospital has to take care of you.

I told folks when I was practicing—it would be the middle of the night—that as long as that emergency room was open—and it was open 24/7—in through the door came folks vomiting blood, heart failure patients, folks with drug overdoses, schizophrenics, diabetics, asthmatics—you name it. They came through that door, and we cared for them all—and somebody paid.

President Trump understands that even if you say you can't afford it, everybody is going to be treated. That is our current system, and that is not going to happen under his watch.

We mentioned that one way to lower premiums is to give poor coverage. I think everyone knows, or many people know, of Mr. Kimmel, the late night comedian who pointed out that when his child was born, instead of celebrating and handing the baby to the mother so the mother could kiss and the father, Mr. Kimmel, could cuddle the baby, the nurses and the doctors looked at the baby and immediately recognized that something was wrong. They recognized that this child was blue. He didn't have oxygen, and if something wasn't done immediately, this child would die.

Folks criticized Mr. Kimmel for being emotional. I totally get it. Instead of cuddling, you are signing a release waiver so your child can be transferred across the city of Los Angeles for emergency surgery. In his emotion, he asked that all children—and I would expand to all Americans—have the ability to get that sort of emergency care done.

Again, the President was about that. I came up with what I called the Kimmel test. Again, it echoes President Trump's contract with the American voter—that we would protect those with preexisting conditions, that we lower premiums, but as we lower premiums, we make sure that the coverage is adequate.

The Kimmel test, making sure there is adequate coverage while lowering premiums and caring for those with preexisting conditions, is so compatible with what President Trump said, because Americans need lower premiums.

Let me echo that one more time. We need to lower premiums. The President's approach, the contract he made with the voters on the campaign trail, is the right approach. You get a bigger risk pool, lots of younger people, so those who are older and sicker have the cost of their care spread out among the many.

We have a plan, the Cassidy-Collins plan, or the Patient Freedom Act, which I introduced with Senator SUSAN COLLINS and four other Senators. We have a way to go about it. One way to get young, healthy folks involved is to do something that we do on Medicare. If you are eligible, you are enrolled unless you call up and say you don't want to be. That is what we do with Medicare. By the way, that is what Fortune 500 companies do with their employees for 401(k) plans, and it works really well.

Ninety-five percent of employees are likely to participate in a 401(k), and they love it. As to people on Medicare, 99 percent stay on Medicare, and 1 percent call up and say: I don't want it. Usually they have better coverage someplace else. As a rule, no one feels coerced because they all know they can call up and say: I don't want it; I don't get it. As it turns out, most do.

The plan we have taken with Cassidy-Collins, in our attempt to fulfill President Trump's contract with the American voter, is that we allow a State to automatically enroll for this, and you would be in. The credit you receive would be sufficient to pay for the annual premium.

If you don't want it, call up. Make it easy. Get out of here. I don't want it.

As a rule, we think folks would be in. By doing this, you expand that risk pool so those old and sicker, those with preexisting conditions, can have their conditions cared for, but we fulfill President Trump's campaign pledge. We also lowered those premiums.

Ultimately, to lower the cost of insurance, you have to lower the cost of healthcare. Cassidy-Collins does that with some conservative approaches that even liberals will like. One way is that we put in what is called price transparency. You would know the price. A mother would know the price of a procedure—an x-ray, a blood test—before she gets it for her daughter, as opposed to finding out 6 months later when she gets the final bill.

Let me give one example. We have all seen those urgent care centers. Some are run by hospitals. Typically, a visit there will cost you $500 to $1,500. Others are run by a group of physicians, or maybe a small business decides to set up an urgent care center. The same visit might cost you as little as $75 to $150. The patient doesn't know that until she gets the bill.

One door has exactly the same appearance and exactly the same type of facility with the same capabilities. In one door and it can cost $500 to $1,500, and in the other door and it can cost $75 to $150, and the patient never knows.

I think we can lower the cost of healthcare by giving the patient the power of knowing what is the price of healthcare.

Think of it. You walk up to a French restaurant in a city you are not familiar with, and you look at the menu posted on the door. You see the prices of the food. Oh, the food is pretty good, but look how expensive it is. Let me go down the street. You go down the street. The food looks good, and it is less expensive.

The power of price informs the patient of what is the best deal for both our health and for our pocketbook. One way we can lower the cost of health insurance is by lowering the cost of healthcare. There are other ways of doing so as well.

Let me return once more to what I said earlier. Americans need lower premiums. President Trump, during the campaign—his contract with the voter, I think, is the right approach to get there.

I will summarize with this. He said he wanted to maintain coverage for those who have insurance, lower premiums, that preexisting conditions would be cared for, and eliminate the ObamaCare mandates. If we fulfill President Trump's goals—and these are goals that folks on the right and left can get behind. By the way, if we do get behind them, premiums will be lower. If we can fulfill President Trump's campaign contract with the American voter, we will lower those premiums, and we will do so by achieving these other great goals.

I yield back.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JERUSALEM DAY

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise today to mark a momentous day. Starting this evening, millions around the world will celebrate Yom Yerushalayim, also known as Jerusalem Day. I am proud to join our close ally, Israel, and the Jewish people in celebrating this historic 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem.

Half a century ago, overcoming Arab armies intent on Israel's destruction, the Israel defense forces liberated the Old City of Jerusalem during the Six-Day War. They courageously and miraculously fought their way to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall, the holiest sites in Judaism. The commander of the paratroopers, Mordechai Gur, unable to contain his emotion, exclaimed through his wireless radio: ''The Temple Mount is in our hands!'' The army rabbi blew the shofar, and the eternal capital of Israel was reunited.

This war was not the first time that Israel was threatened with annihilation. After the Jewish people established the modern State of Israel in their ancient homeland just 19 years earlier, neighboring Arab States responded to Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's declaration of independence with an invasion. The Arab armies failed to destroy the newly established Jewish State, but Jerusalem, the ancient and Holy City central to the identity of the Jewish people, was left divided and occupied by Jordan.

Residents of the Old City were murdered or expelled. Jews were prohibited from visiting and praying at the Temple Mount and Western Wall. Their synagogues were destroyed, and their cemeteries, such as the Mount of Olives, were desecrated. Access for Christians to their holy sites was also severely restricted.

Leading up to June of 1967, Arab leaders repeatedly and openly expressed their desire to wipe Israel off the map. Syria was engaging in attacks on Israel from the Golan Heights and soon started to mobilize its forces for battle. Egypt began moving troops into the Sinai Peninsula in a massive military buildup, demanded and achieved the withdrawal of the U.N. Emergency Force that had been stationed in the Sinai, and then closed the Straits of Tehran, imposing an illegal blockade on Israel and cutting off a vital shipping lane for the Jewish State. Jordan then signed a mutual defense agreement with Egypt.

Outnumbered and outgunned and against all odds in the face of external pressure not to act first to ensure its survival, the Jewish State launched a successful, preemptive strike against its hostile neighbors and prevailed in a defensive war. When it was over, Jerusalem was liberated, reuniting the city and Judaism's holiest sites with the Jewish people and putting an end to almost two decades of exclusion from the Old City.

Since coming under its sovereignty, Israel, the one true democracy in the Middle East that shares our values of freedom, has protected people of all faiths in Jerusalem and ensured their access to holy sites so that they might worship freely. They have protected the rights of Jews, of Christians, and of Muslims. This has occurred even while religious minorities are being targeted, persecuted, and attacked throughout the Middle East and religious and historical sites are being demolished today by radical Islamic terrorists.

Today is a day where we must also reassert historical truth: The historical connection between the Jewish people and Jerusalem and the land of Israel did not begin in 1967. These profound ties to Jerusalem have existed for thousands of years. They can be traced back and have been reaffirmed through numerous archeological excavations such as those in the city of David.

In the past several years, I have traveled to Israel three times. There is something that stirs inside each time I am there. It is remarkable to observe the great successes and achievements of this small and yet mighty country that is one of America's strongest allies in the world.

It is long past time that America do something it should have done two decades ago: Move the American Embassy to Jerusalem and formally recognize Jerusalem as Israel's eternal and undivided capital. In every nation on Earth our Embassy is in its capital city except for Israel. There is no reason Israel should be treated any worse when they are such a reliable and unshakeable ally.

We should honor the promise that Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents have made for decades and move our Embassy to Jerusalem. So I stand today to express my solidarity with Israel and with the Jewish people during this major celebration. Now, more than ever, America stands strong with our unshakeable friend and ally, the nation of Israel.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here to discuss what you might call the Scott Pruitt philosophy of environmental regulation. In a recent interview, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency expressed his view that the EPA should ''simply pass regulations that provide fairness and equity and allow utilities to make decisions based upon stability, cost, and security to the consumers that they serve.'' Did we notice anything missing in that assertion of what EPA's role should be? How about no mention of the environment, no mention of climate change, no mention of public health? So my 168th ''Time to Wake Up'' speech will look at how paid-for Administrator Pruitt is by the very industries he is supposed to be regulating. Often, the word for this is ''corruption.''

Scott Pruitt is a functionary of fossil fuel money. He has a long record of dark money fundraising and long, cozy relationships with big fossil fuel political donors.

As you can see, energy interests contributed over $136,000 to Pruitt's 2014 campaign even though he ran unopposed. During the 2010 and 2014 election cycles, oil and gas giants Devon Energy and Koch Industries—yes, of those infamous Koch brothers—maxed out to Pruitt's campaigns.

Thanks to Pulitzer Prize-winning reporting by the New York Times, we know that backing Pruitt was a good fossil fuel investment, particularly for Devon Energy. In 2011, Attorney General Scott Pruitt took a letter written by Devon Energy, he put it onto his Oklahoma attorney general letterhead, he signed it for them, and he sent it off to EPA, pleading Devon Energy's anti-regulatory case as if it were his own.

As attorney general of Oklahoma, Pruitt directly solicited political donations from companies now regulated by EPA, then regulated by EPA as well.

He spoke at dozens of industry events but never at a public health or environmental event.

He led the boards of political organizations, like the Republican Attorneys General Association and its dark money political fundraising arm, the so-called Rule of Law Defense Fund, this thing. Pruitt was a member of the RAGA executive committee—RAGA being Republican Attorneys General Association. He was a member of their executive committee between 2014 and 2016, when RAGA raised $530,000 from Koch Industries—yes, those same infamous Koch brothers—and $125,000 from Devon Energy—yes, of the letter he put onto his own letterhead.

Coal giant Murray Energy donated $50,000 to Liberty 2.0, Pruitt's own super PAC, and it donated $350,000 to RAGA between 2014 and 2016.

The Rule of Law Defense Fund doesn't have to disclose its donors. They hide in a loophole in the law. But other public reporting has shown that it received at least $175,000 from something called Freedom Partners. With a name like that, you know it is up to no good. Sure enough, it is another dark

money group run by several Koch Industries executives. That is not Coca-Cola; that is the Koch brothers' fossil fuel processing company.

We don't know more about this. Why do we not know more about this? Because Republicans in the Senate protected Scott Pruitt from having to answer these questions during his confirmation process.

While he was busily helping raise dark money, dark money groups, in turn, came back and worked hard to help Pruitt get confirmed to the EPA. A Republican opposition research PAC called America Rising launched a pro-Pruitt ad campaign, and its dark money arm, America Rising Squared, funded confirmpruitt.com. A 501(c)(4) dark money entity ironically named Protecting America Now was created solely to help confirm Pruitt to the EPA. Its fliers asked for contributions ranging from $25,000 to $500,000. Just another grassroots group trying to get a good guy confirmed. Koch Industries' own lobbying disclosure forms reveal it spent part of $3.1 million lobbying to confirm Scott Pruitt.

In Trump's science-denial Cabinet, Administrator Pruitt seems to see little reason to hide his anti-environment and Republican political interests. He has spoken at the Conservative Political Action Conference and the American Farm Bureau board meeting. He attended rallies with coal miners against his own regulations and met with the National Mining Association's executive committee ''to lay out his concerns with the Paris accord'' the day before the mining association voted to press President Trump to withdraw from that agreement.

Administrator Pruitt planned to appear as the keynote speaker at the Oklahoma Republican Party Gala on May 5. This invitation mentioned his official position as EPA Administrator three times. It featured this photo of him being sworn in as the EPA Administrator. It promised donors a ''once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hear him discuss his plans to slash regulations, bring back jobs to Oklahoma, and decrease the size of the EPA.'' Well, the 1939 Act to Prevent Pernicious Political Activities, more commonly known as the Hatch Act, forbids this, so I filed a Hatch Act complaint and Administrator Pruitt's appearance was canceled. The Office of Special Counsel is now conducting a full investigation.

But it wasn't just there. He goes to other dinners. On February 28, 2017, Pruitt was a speaker at a RAGA major donors dinner. You know who major donors are by now. Days after the RAGA major donors dinner, Pruitt unilaterally withdrew an EPA request for information from oil and gas producers about their methane emissions, citing a letter from nine members of RAGA and two Republican Governors, who alleged the methane information request ''furthers the previous administration's climate agenda and supports . . . the imposition of burdensome climate rules on existing sites, the cost and expense of which will be enormous.''

There was no public comment period. There was no request for input from other States. This basically was a little party favor for his RAGA pals right after the RAGA dinner.

This EPA Administrator has solicited thousands, if not millions, of dollars from corporations he now regulates. Our current ethics laws do not require nominees in the confirmation process to disclose their political and dark money connections, so the Senate and the public are kept blind to the conflicts of interest of such nominees, and we have no idea how those conflicts would manifest in their offices. Pruitt knows who gave dark money to his political causes. The corporations know what dark money they gave. It is just the rest of us who are in the dark.

This is new, and this is weird. This was not a problem for President Obama's nominees because the dark money political tsunami that has swamped our politics in slime did not exist when President Obama was elected. It was the Citizens United decision of 2010 that allowed unlimited political spending by big special interests, and that unlimited money found dark money channels.

To address the gaping loophole in our Federal ethics laws, I have introduced the Conflicts from Political Fundraising Act with Senators UDALL, CARPER, VAN HOLLEN, and FRANKEN. This bill would require Presidentially appointed Federal officials like Scott Pruitt to disclose their political fundraising, and it would require Federal ethics officials to address these conflicts by, for example, making sure officials are recused from decisions affecting big political donors, making sure the public has the information to know they should ask for a recusal because the director is conflicted by reason of his political relationship with big dark money donors.

I wish the conflicts at EPA stopped with the Administrator, but they don't. It is a swarm of swampy conflict over there. Pruitt has surrounded himself with political operatives and fossil fuel lobbyists. The Associate EPA Administrator for Policy previously worked at RAGA, the Rule of Law Defense Fund, and something called the Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce—a Koch brothers-funded dark money group that has underwritten the Rule of Law Defense Fund. EPA's Senior Adviser for Regional and State Affairs came from Pruitt's own fossil fuel-funded super PAC, Oklahoma Strong. The Assistant Administrator for Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations came from the oil company, the Hess Corporation. One Deputy Associate Administrator is the former president of the Ohio Coal Association. Another Deputy Associate Administrator was a registered lobbyist at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, where she specifically lobbied against EPA's Clean Power Plan and New Source Performance Standard, the clean water rule, the ozone standard, EPA enforcement, pesticides bills, budget resolutions, and EPA appropriations bills.

This corruption of EPA is the work of the fossil fuel industry. One day there must come a reckoning.

Just this weekend, the New York Times reported ''How Rollbacks at Scott Pruitt's E.P.A. Are a Boon to Oil and Gas.'' The article included a checklist of rollbacks that specifically benefit long-time Pruitt benefactor Devon Energy—the one that got the letter—delaying a rule raising royalties on fossil energy production on Federal land, undoing new fracking standards, rolling back rules on the leaking and flaring of methane, and rolling back reporting of methane emissions.

In another matter, Devon Energy had been preparing to pay a settlement of over $100,000 and to install emissions scrubbing equipment to remedy illegal emissions from a Wyoming natural gas facility. Five days after Pruitt was installed at EPA, the company told officials it was ''re-evaluating its settlement posture,'' offering a quarter of what it had previously proposed to settle the charges and scrapping the emissions controls entirely. They know their Administrator Pruitt.

Pruitt's record at EPA reveals he is unabashedly looking out for his industry donors at the expense of public health and the environment. As far as I can tell, every action he has taken since taking office will lead to an enriched industry—at the expense of dirtier air and dirtier water—and a more imperiled climate.

Myron Ebell is someone I don't quote often. He is the head of President Trump's EPA transition team and a prominent climate denier. He has something interesting to say about Scott Pruitt. He has said that he thinks Scott Pruitt is using EPA as a ''stepping stone to political office'' and that ''everything he does is going to be a political calculation about what furthers his own political career.''

This is not a liberal environmentalist making these accusations. This is somebody who is right in Scott Pruitt's climate denial wheelhouse. This is someone from the Trump science denial EPA destruction team. This is the guy who is in the club of fossil fuel-funded climate denial, and he thinks everything Pruitt does is a political calculation about what furthers Pruitt's own political career. If that is the case, everything Scott Pruitt does is a conflict of interest, as he sees regulated industry as the funders of his next political campaign. They pay for him now, and he delivers.

Sadly, the people who own Pruitt also own Congress. So good luck getting an honest look at this mess from our fossil fuel-funded colleagues in the majority.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered,

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO DANIEL J. McLAUGHLIN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few moments to acknowledge my friend, Mayor Daniel J. McLaughlin of the Village of Orland Park, in my home State of Illinois. There is no stronger advocate for the people of Orland Park than Dan McLaughlin. For more than three decades, he has served his community with distinction.

Dan began his service to Orland Park in 1983 as a village trustee. A decade later, he was elected mayor and would go on to serve for six terms. In 1995, Mayor McLaughlin created the Orland Park Open Lands program, which preserved nearly 300 acres of open space, two family farms, and created the village's nature center. In the same year, he completed the Orland Park Veterans Memorial. Each Memorial and Veterans Day, the village gathers at the memorial, Ara Pace—Place of Peace, at the Orland Park Village Center—and adds the names of veterans to the granite wall surrounding the memorial. It is a wonderful tribute that allows residents of Orland Park to thank those who bravely served our country.

During his tenure, Mayor McLaughlin also brought the community together through an increase in village sponsored events and outdoor concerts. He believed in fitness for fun, and his leadership helped save the Orland Park Health and Fitness Center, created Centennial Park West, and expanded the aquatic center, which now includes ice skating, sledding, a dog park, and bicycle paths.

His governing philosophy was simple, ''plan for people not cars.'' That vision led to a pedestrian-friendly center in the heart of downtown Orland Park in the historic 143rd train station, where people can come together to play and work. Throughout his career, Mayor McLaughlin grew Orland Park's economy by marketing the I–80 corridor, helping to bring in new businesses while retaining the ones already thriving in the village.

Mayor McLaughlin has been honored by numerous organizations, including the American Institute of Architects; Chaddick Institute; Chicago Magazine; Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors' Bureau; Congress of New Urbanism; Government Finance Officers Association; Home Builders Association of Greater Chicago; Illinois Arts Council; Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police; Metropolitan Mayors Caucus; Moraine Valley Community College; the Chicago Building Congress; the United States Conference of Mayors; and the United States Green Building Council—just to name a few.

I want to thank Mayor McLaughlin for his commitment to the people of Orland Park. I especially want to thank Dan's wife, Patricia McLaughlin, and four children—Bridget, Mary Kate, Dan, and Matt—for sharing so much of their husband and father with the Village of Orland Park. Now as he moves to the next chapter in his life, I wish him and his family all the best.

LIFESPAN RESPITE CARE REAUTHORIZATION ACT

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to be joined by my colleague from Wisconsin, Senator BALDWIN, in introducing the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act of 2017.

Every day, an estimated 43 million family caregivers attend to loved ones who are experiencing chronic, disabling health conditions. While many of these individuals care for an older adult, almost one-third of caregivers attend to persons under the age of 50. Caregivers help individuals remain at home, often delaying the need for nursing home or foster care placements. The value of their efforts are tremendous, amounting to more than $470 billion in uncompensated care. This task, however, can take a toll. Caregivers experience higher mortality rates and are more likely to acquire acute and chronic health conditions. That is why respite care is so important. It provides temporary relief to caregivers from their ongoing responsibilities, reducing the toll they experience. Respite care helps keep caregivers healthy, keeps families intact, and provides a substantial public value.

Recently, the Senate Aging Committee, which I chair, held a hearing on age-friendly communities. Meg Callaway, the project director of the Piscataquis Thriving in Place Coalition in Dover-Foxcroft, ME, testified that ''the one most critical service is respite.'' We have heard this time and time again.

In 2006, when the Lifespan Respite Care Act was originally enacted, the goal was to improve the delivery and quality of respite care available to all caregivers. Since that time, 35 States and the District of Columbia have received grants to increase the availability and quality or respite services.

Still, with an increasing number of Americans with chronic conditions who require some amount of caregiver support on a daily basis, the need for respite care continues to increase and outpace available resources.

The legislation that we are introducing would authorize $15 million per year for 5 years, through 2022, to extend the program. Such funding would provide competitive grants to States to establish or enhance statewide Lifespan Respite systems that maximize existing resources and help ensure that quality respite care is available and accessible to all family caregivers. This reauthorization also would require grantees to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programs and activities funded under such grants.

Thirty-six aging and disability organizations have endorsed the Lifespan Respite Care Reauthorization Act, including the ARCH National Respite Network, the Alzheimer's Association, the Michael J. Fox Foundation, and the Elizabeth Dole Foundation.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

35TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARGARET CHASE SMITH LIBRARY

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, in 1973, when Senator Margaret Chase Smith returned to private life and her hometown of Skowhegan, ME, she brought with her hundreds of thousands of documents, photographs, recordings, and memorabilia accumulated during her remarkable 33 years of public service. Nine years later, in 1982, with the support and encouragement of her many friends and admirers, her dream of establishing a library was realized. Today I wish to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the Margaret Chase Smith Library.

The Margaret Chase Smith Library is one of our Nation's premier freestanding congressional libraries, a priceless archive and museum, and an invaluable educational center. From the very start, it was Senator Smith's wish for the library to be more than a storehouse of papers and a collection of mementos. She wanted it to be a place of aspirations, an institution where students would be inspired to public service. She wanted it to be a source of insight and information for historical scholarship from the perspective of a historic leader. Just as important, she wanted it to be a place where citizens would come together to discuss important policy issues in an atmosphere of civility and respect.

Senator Smith did more than wish for those things; she worked to bring them about. From opening day in August of 1982 until shortly before her passing in 1995, she presided over the facility, meeting with schoolchildren, researchers, policymakers, and engaged citizens. The library as it exists today stands on the foundation of a great leader's commitment to service.

This great accomplishment is the work of many hands. Outstanding directors, dedicated staff, an exceptional board of directors, Northwood University, the Margaret Chase Smith Policy

Center at the University of Maine, the Margaret Chase Smith Foundation, and Senator Smith's close friend and adviser, Merton Henry, have worked together in a collaborative spirit that pays the highest tribute to Senator Smith and her legacy.

That legacy is, above all, a reminder of the obligation we all share to uphold the values and ideals of our Nation. Thanks to the Margaret Chase Smith Library, that message remains strong. I congratulate its staff and many supporters on this 35th anniversary and know that this library will continue to inspire us for generations to come.

RECOGNIZING LONGFELLOW'S GREENHOUSE

Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the 40th anniversary of Longfellow's Greenhouse of Manchester, ME, a family-owned small business and a leader in the greenhouse industry.

Longfellow's Greenhouse opened during the winter of 1977. That year, with the help of their son, Scott, owners Lawrence and Mavis Longfellow built 12 large greenhouses and a retail shop on a meadow in Manchester. In the years that followed, the business flourished and expanded. Scott has been integral to that success, applying the knowledge and expertise learned through his studies at the University of Maine at Orono and holding the positions of grower and general manager up until this year. Today Scott's son, Will, carries on the tradition as general manager.

Over the course of four decades, the Longfellow family and their devoted employees have built more than a business. They have created a seasonal destination, especially in the spring and holidays, where families can gather to create gardens, landscapes, and traditions filled with flowers, plants, and fond memories. In addition to providing outstanding services and a great experience, they are widely known for giving back to the community through both their time and proceeds. Longfellow's has helped create new ideas that enrich the gardening experience for their customers, all the while placing a special emphasis on presentation and education by holding special events that offer demonstrations, lectures, and hands-on classes.

Today Longfellow's stands out with 21 greenhouses, where they produce 40,000 geraniums, 22,000 fall mums, 15,000 flowering hanging baskets, 75,000 perennials, and 25,000 poinsettias. Among the diverse flowers and plants they house are 800 varieties of perennials, 200 varieties of herbs and scented geraniums—over half of which are grown on site—more than 500 varieties of trees, shrubs, and vines, and 100 varieties of roses.

Longfellow's Greenhouse has set the standard for horticulture in Maine, and they have done so while promoting civic engagement and practicing honest and ethical business—all of which will continue to make it a special part of central Maine. Not only have they fostered a positive culture around gardening, but their efforts have also engaged the imagination of people of all ages. I am proud and honored to join with all those who are celebrating this achievement and recognizing their high quality of work on behalf of all Maine people. I thank them for their tremendous contributions to our State.

TRIBUTE TO RANDALL D. BOOKOUT

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute and offer my deep appreciation to Randy Bookout for his many years of dedicated service as a professional staff member on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, SSCI. Randy joined the committee staff in October 1999 and served in various capacities, most recently as the committee's budget monitor for the Central Intelligence Agency, CIA. During his almost 18 years with the committee, Randy established a solid reputation of fairness and professionalism that was widely respected by members and staff, regardless of party, and officials within intelligence community elements over which he conducted oversight.

Randall D. Bookout joined the committee after serving a 28-year career with the Army, retiring as a colonel in the infantry. His distinguished Army career included assignments as a company commander in Korea and Panama and as an infantry battalion commander in Alaska. He served as a staff officer in the Office of the Army Chief of Staff and later as the senior military aide to Secretary of the Army Togo D. West, Jr. His last duty in the Army was as the Army's Chief of Legislative Liaison for the Senate from 1995–1999. Randy graduated with a bachelor of science degree from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Northern Colorado. He attended the Army's War College at Carlisle Barracks, PA, as well as airborne and Ranger training.

Senator RICHARD SHELBY of Alabama, who often traveled with Colonel Bookout when he served as the Army chief liaison for the Senate, was chairman of the SSCI in 1999 and asked Randy to interview for a nonpartisan staff job on the committee. Randy retired from the Army on a Friday and began work at SSCI the following Monday. As often was the case, Randy took to the challenge of this new role with a deep commitment, including long hours of study to learn an entire new encyclopedia of acronyms from the ones he knew after 28 years in the Army.

Much of Randy's work for the committee must remain unspoken. I will simply say here that he has made significant contributions to this country's national security and to the operations and activities of the CIA and the rest of the intelligence community. He knew the Agency in detail, seriously challenged it at times, and fiercely defended it at others. He forced changes that improved its operations, while at all times respecting its mission and, most importantly, respecting the women and men who worked there.

In fact, one of Randy's greatest traits and admirable qualities is that he cared not only for the organization, but genuinely cared about the individuals. His job was to focus on big programs, run by hundreds if not thousands of people, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, and affecting the lives of countless others. He did that oversight job exceptionally well. He also saw and noticed each person who was a part of these big operations. Randy did what he could to help them perform their mission and to help them in their personal lives when something was amiss. For example, he helped a woman who served admirably for both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the CIA, who unjustly lost her American citizenship. Randy helped get her legal resident status back. He helped an intelligence official, who left government service due to health problems incurred in a war zone, get the retirement ceremony he rightly deserved and was important to him and his family. After every trip he took for the committee, he left a trail of handwritten thank you notes that traced his path. He not only never forgot the little guy, Randy knew their name.

In the committee office, Randy always represents the highest standard of professionalism and collegiality. He always took the time to mentor young staffers, was willing to share his knowledge on programs or activities, and has never shied away from a request for assistance from a colleague. A fellow staff noted that Randy ''treats colleagues, superiors and the most junior staff member with respect and encouragement. He treats the intelligence officials with whom we interact in the same manner. So many times I've seen him engage with junior officers in challenging and remote settings at odd hours of the night, and his interest and enthusiasm for their work leaves them invigorated and inspired to do their work.''

Staff have shared many interesting stories and traits about Randy. He is generally the first to arrive in the office, around 5 to 6 a.m. For his 60th birthday, he ran an Iron Man triathlon. Colleagues talked about his love of travel, strange penchant for weird hats, participation in a Tough Mudder, and the particularly interesting fact that he and his family were chosen to be on the ''Family Feud'' TV show. They won. Staff also have noted his constant positive demeanor, even when addressing difficult and challenging issues, but, foremost, they noted his commitment to and pride in his family.

After 46 years of serving his Nation, Randy will retire next week to the

great State of North Carolina with his wife of 44 years, Cindi Bookout. He talks proudly and lovingly of her and their two children. Their son, LTC Josh Bookout, graduated from West Point and is currently serving his third tour in Afghanistan as a battalion commander. Their daughter, Whitney Corey, achieved a master's degree in psychology and is currently in San Diego. Retirement will give Randy and Cindi well-deserved time to be grandparents to their six wonderful grandchildren: Cade, Brock, Colt, Ali, Chloe, and Ainsley.

Let me close by again noting that Randy's commitment to his mission, his colleagues, his family, and his country is unquestioned. I want to thank him for his energy, his intellect, his passion, and his efforts on my behalf and on behalf of the committee. I am certain that I can on the Senate floor here today also express the appreciation of the six chairmen and vice chairmen of the committee, all of whom Randy served, for his service and share our collective wish for great joy and happiness in the next stage of his life.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING RUTH'S REUSABLE RESOURCES

• Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the efforts of Ruth Libby and her work with Ruth's Reusable Resources. Her organization operates in southern Maine and is dedicated to ensuring that students ranging from preschool to 12th grade are adequately prepared with the basic tools of learning.

When Ruth Libby's son was in kindergarten, she received a note from his teacher requesting household items such as egg cartons, meat trays, and juice can lids for use in craft projects. Ruth responded to this request in full force and went above and beyond by not only getting supplies to her son's classroom, but also for other classrooms in the school. As time went on, she began receiving, sorting, and stocking products donated by corporations, businesses, and individuals for use by local classrooms. Ruth started by delivering these items to the school, and a few years later, she established a ''storeroom'' in her basement where teachers could come and ''shop'' at their convenience. With financial assistance from the Unum Group and a grant from the State of Maine Department of Education, Ruth was able to create a unique and effective nonprofit organization and relocate to the organization's current 21,000-square-foot warehouse and 7,000-square-foot teacher store in Portland, ME.

Since its inception in 1994, Ruth's Reusable Resources has provided more than $60 million worth of surplus furniture, paper, books, office supplies, and computers to nonprofits and schools. They have also received donated furniture, paper, books, office supplies, and computers from corporations, businesses, and individuals across the State of Maine. In turn, Ruth's Reusable Resources allows staff members of participating schools to ''shop'' for supplies at no charge. Ruth, together with a diverse group of hard-working volunteers, ranging from retired teachers, students, current teachers, corporate groups, retirees, court appointed volunteers, civic groups, collegiate ministries, and many more, work to ensure that every Maine student is provided with the necessary supplies to succeed in school.

Ruth's Reusable Resources is a shining example of what can happen when you have determination and a passion to make a difference. Ruth is an outstanding example of a hard-working Mainer who is making a difference in her community and across our State. She has played an instrumental role in providing resources for classrooms in Maine which has furthered the education of many students. Thank you. Ruth, for all you have already done for both the students and their teachers in communities throughout Maine. I look forward to following your continued success.•

170TH ANNIVERSARY OF CLIFFS NATURAL RESOURCES

• Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, today I wish to offer my congratulations to Cliffs Natural Resources and its outstanding employees on the company's 170th anniversary. I am honored to celebrate this milestone with the largest and oldest independent iron ore mining company in the United States.

In 1847, 11 men from Cleveland founded Cliffs Natural Resources to develop ore in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Cliffs has since grown to be a leader in North American mining, employing thousands and providing U.S. steelmakers with world-class raw materials.

Mining has always been a way of life for families on Minnesota's Iron Range, including my own. My grandfather worked 1,500 feet underground in the mines of Ely, MN. His generation helped build our Nation's steel industry into the global power it is today. The Iron Range has the largest concentration of iron ore in the United States. Right now, Minnesota is first in the Nation in the movement of iron ore, with more than 4,000 jobs associated with the iron ore and steel industries. Throughout our State's history, iron ore mining has not only brought jobs to the region, it has also built our country, from our roads, bridges, buildings, and railways, to the tanks and ships critical to our Nation's defense. The Iron Range also supplied most of the iron used in World War II.

In recent years, Cliffs has focused its energies on revitalizing iron ore mines and processing plants in the United States. In August of last year, Cliffs broke ground on a $75 million expansion at its United Taconite plant in Forbes, MN. I am proud to support companies like Cliffs that are committed to creating jobs for Minnesotans for generations to come. Cliffs is also well known for its commitment to corporate stewardship. From contributing to building homes for families through Habitat for Humanity, to helping ensure children in need get a nutritious meal through United Way programs, Cliffs has been committed to Minnesota families and communities.

This 170th anniversary of Cliffs' founding is a remarkable achievement. I am pleased to take this opportunity to congratulate Cliffs chairman, president, and chief executive officer Lourenco Goncalves and the employees of Cliffs on celebrating this occasion. Best wishes for much continued success.•

REMEMBERING SUE SHAFFER

• Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I wish to honor a rare and wonderful individual known throughout Oregon and the Nation who passed away on April 11 at the age of 94. Chairman Sue Shaffer, of the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians, lived a powerful life as a nonstop advocate for her family, her Tribe, and her community. As a mother, wife, daughter and friend, Sue created an atmosphere of energy, honesty, and kindness wherever she went. For Sue, no person or job was too big or too small to embrace.

Sue was a descendant of one of the seven founding families of the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe. She grew up during the Great Depression in rural Douglas County at a time when everything was scarce. Despite her family's own struggle, their door was always open to neighbors in need of food or lodging, and they were always willing to support their community members. As she liked to recall, she grew up in a household where honesty, moral integrity, education, hard work, and helping others were all high priorities. For Sue and her family, life's rewards came from working hard and reaching out to others—and that is just what she did.

Sue's mother, Nellie Crispin, kept records of the Tribe's heritage and passed down to her daughter the desire to fight for Tribal recognition. That vision and determination drove Sue to play an instrumental role in convincing Congress to formally recognize the Tribe in 1982. In 1983, Sue Shaffer became chair of the newly restored Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe, and for nearly 30 years, she worked with her Tribe and the community and expanded the Tribe's prominence by growing its economic footprint.

Sue served as delegate to the National Congress of American Indians, delegate to the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and delegate to Indian Women's Leadership White House

Conference, but her leadership in the community was not limited to the Tribe. Sue served on a myriad of boards in the community, including Umpqua Community College, becoming the first woman to chair the board. Throughout her life, Sue was also honored with many awards, including the 1999 President's Award for outstanding contribution to community in economic development by the Roseburg Chamber of Commerce, 2000 Female Citizen of the Year award for ''unselfish devotion and distinguished service'' by the Roseburg Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Eleanor Roosevelt Award in 2003. She was inducted into the Hall of Fame at Umpqua Community College in June 1999 in recognition of the 17 years she served on the UCC board of trustees.

Sue Shaffer was a dear friend, always known for being fair and never one to hesitate to ''tell it like it is.'' I will greatly miss Sue's friendship and good counsel. She was a true dynamo whose eloquent and powerful advocacy helped right the long, tragic history of wrongs inflicted on the Cow Creek and other Tribes in Oregon. Sue gladly led on so many fronts to improve life for the Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe, create a better Douglas County and a better place for all of Oregon to enjoy. Her indelible legacy of achievement for our State and our Nation will live on to benefit generations to come.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

BUDGET OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2018—PM 8

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with accompanying reports and papers; which was referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975, as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; to the Committees on the Budget; and Appropriations:

To the Congress of the United States:

On February 28, I spoke to a joint session of the Congress about what we need to do to begin a new chapter of American Greatness. I asked the Nation to look forward nine years and imagine the wonders we could achieve by America's 250th anniversary of our Independence if we set free the dreams of our people by removing the barriers holding back our economic growth.

This Budget's defining ambition is to unleash the dreams of the American people. This requires laying a new foundation for American Greatness.

Through streamlined Government, we will drive an economic boom that raises incomes and expands job opportunities for all Americans. Faster economic growth, coupled with fiscal restraint, will enable us to fully fund our national priorities, balance our budget, and start to pay down our national debt.

Our moral commitment to replacing our current economic stagnation with faster economic growth rests on the following eight pillars of reform:

Health Reform. We need to enable Americans to buy the healthcare they need at a price they can afford. To this end, we must repeal Obamacare and its burdensome regulations and mandates, and replace it with a framework that restores choice and competition. This will lower the cost of care so that more Americans can get the medical attention they need. Additionally, Medicaid, which inadequately serves enrollees and taxpayers, must be reformed to allow States to manage their own programs, with continued financial support from the Federal Government.

Tax Reform and Simplification. We must reduce the tax burden on American workers and businesses, so that we can maximize incomes and economic growth. We must also simplify our tax system, so that individuals and businesses do not waste countless hours and resources simply paying their taxes.

Immigration Reform. We must reform immigration policy so that it serves our national interest. We will adopt commonsense proposals that protect American workers, reduce burdens on taxpayers and public resources, and focus Federal funds on underserved and disadvantaged citizens.

Reductions in Federal Spending. We must scrutinize every dollar the Federal Government spends. Just as families decide how to manage limited budgets, we must ensure the Federal Government spends precious taxpayer dollars only on our highest national priorities, and always in the most efficient, effective manner.

Regulatory Rollback. We must eliminate every outdated, unnecessary, or ineffective Federal regulation, and move aggressively to build regulatory frameworks that stimulate—rather than stagnate—job creation. Even for those regulations we must leave in place, we must strike every provision that is counterproductive, ineffective, or outdated.

American Energy Development. We must increase development of America's energy resources, strengthening our national security, lowering the price of electricity and transportation fuels, and driving down the cost of consumer goods so that every American individual and business has more money to save and invest. A consistent, long-term supply of lower-cost American energy brings with it a much larger economy, more jobs, and greater security for the American people.

Welfare Reform. We must reform our welfare system so that it does not discourage able-bodied adults from working, which takes away scarce resources from those in real need. Work must be the center of our social policy.

Education Reform. We need to return decisions regarding education back to the State and local levels, while advancing opportunities for parents and students to choose, from all available options, the school that best fits their needs to learn and succeed.

To unleash the power of American work and creativity—and drive opportunity and faster economic growth—we must reprioritize Federal spending so that it advances the safety and security of the American people.

This Budget, therefore, includes $639 billion for the Department of Defense—a $52 billion increase from the 2017 annualized continuing resolution level. This increase will be offset by targeted reductions elsewhere. This defense funding is vital to rebuilding, modernizing, and preparing our Armed Forces for the future so that our military remains the world's preeminent fighting force and we can continue to ensure peace through strength. This Budget also increases funding to take care of our great veterans, who have served their country with such honor and distinction.

The Budget also meets the need to materially increase funding for border security, immigration enforcement, and law enforcement at the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice. These funding increases will provide additional resources for a southern border wall, expanded detention capacity, and initiatives to reduce violent crime, as well as more immigration judges, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, and Border Patrol agents. The Budget also invests significant resources in efforts to combat opioid abuse.

In these dangerous times, our increased attention to public safety and national security sends a clear message to the world—a message of American strength and resolve. It follows through on my promise to focus on keeping Americans safe, keeping terrorists out of our Nation, and putting violent offenders behind bars.

As this Budget returns us to economic prosperity, it will also allow us to fund additional priorities, including infrastructure, student loan reform, and initiatives to help working families such as paid parental leave. We will champion the hardworking taxpayers who have been ignored for too long. Once we end our economic stagnation and return to robust growth, so many of our aspirations will be within reach.

It is now up to the Congress to act. I pledge my full cooperation in ending the economic malaise that has, for too long, crippled the dreams of our people. The time for small thinking is over. As we look forward to our 250th year, I am calling upon all Members of Congress to join me in striving to do big and bold and daring things for our Nation.

We have it in our power to set free the dreams of our people. Let us begin.

DONALD J. TRUMP.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *May 23, 2017*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 695. An act to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes.

H.R. 883. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a certification process for the issuance of nondisclosure requirements accompanying certain administrative subpoenas, to provide for judicial review of such nondisclosure requirements, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1188. An act to reauthorize certain programs established by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1625. An act to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to include severe forms of trafficking in persons within the definition of transnational organized crime for purposes of the rewards program of the Department of State, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1842. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to include State crimes of violence as grounds for an enhanced penalty when sex offenders fail to register or report certain information as required by Federal law, to include prior military offenses for purposes of recidivist sentencing provisions, and for other purposes.

H.R. 1862. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to expand the scope of certain definitions pertaining to unlawful sexual conduct, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 4003(e) of the 21st Century Cures Act (Public Law 114–255), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Health Information Technology Advisory Committee: Mr. Patrick Soon-Shiong of Culver City, California.

The message further announced that pursuant to section 1 of the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board Act (2 U.S.C. 154), and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board for a 5-year term: Ambassador Richard Fredericks of San Francisco, California.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 2(a) of the National Cultural Center Act (20 U.S.C. 76h(a)), amended by Public Law 107–117, and the order of the House of January 3, 2017, the Speaker appoints the following Member on the part of the House of Representatives to the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: Mr. MACARTHUR of New Jersey.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 695. An act to amend the National Child Protection Act of 1993 to establish a national criminal history background check system and criminal history review program for certain individuals who, related to their employment, have access to children, the elderly, or individuals with disabilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 883. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to provide a certification process for the issuance of nondisclosure requirements accompanying certain administrative subpoenas, to provide for judicial review of such nondisclosure requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1188. An act to reauthorize certain programs established by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1625. An act to amend the State Department Basic Authorities Act of 1956 to include severe forms of trafficking in persons within the definition of transnational organized crime for purposes of the rewards program of the Department of State, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

H.R. 1842. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to include State crimes of violence as grounds for an enhanced penalty when sex offenders fail to register or report certain information as required by Federal law, to include prior military offenses for purposes of recidivist sentencing provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

H.R. 1862. An act to amend title 18, United States Code, to expand the scope of certain definitions pertaining to unlawful sexual conduct, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–1637. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the designation of a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the Secretary of State (OSS–2017–0521); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1638. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, and Saudi Arabia to support the assembly, modification, testing, training, operation, maintenance, and integration of the Paveway II and II, Enhanced Paveway II and III, and Paveway IV Weapons Systems for the Royal Saudi Air Force, in the amount of $50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16–043); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1639. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Saudi Arabia to support the integration, installation, operation, training, testing, maintenance, and repair of the FMU–152A/B Joint Programmable Bomb (JPB) Fuze System in the amount of $14,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16–011); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1640. A communication from the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles, including technical data, and defense services to Saudi Arabia to support the integration, installation, operation, training, testing, maintenance, and repair of the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) in the amount of $50,000,000 or more (Transmittal No. DDTC 16–132); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. MCCAIN for the Committee on Armed Services.

*David L. Norquist, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller).

*Elaine McCusker, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

*Kari A. Bingen, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense.

*Robert Daigle, of Virginia, to be Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Department of Defense.

*Robert Story Karem, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

*Kenneth P. Rapuano, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense.

Air Force nomination of Brig. Gen. Sean L. Murphy, to be Major General.

Navy nominations beginning with Capt. John A. Okon and ending with Capt. Michael W. Studeman, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 21, 2017.

Navy nominations beginning with Capt. Edward L. Anderson and ending with Capt. James P. Waters III, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 21, 2017. (minus 1 nominee: Capt. Peter G. Vasely)

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Bradford J. Shwedo, to be Lieutenant General.

Air Force nomination of Maj. Gen. Giovanni K. Tuck, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Lt. Gen. James C. McConville, to be General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Stuart W. Risch, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Thomas C. Seamands, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Col. Mark E. Black, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Matthew V. Baker, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Chris R. Gentry, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Robert A. Karmazin, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Marion Garcia, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Joseph E. Whitlock, to be Major General.

Army nomination of Col. Miguel A. Castellanos, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Windsor S. Buzza, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Randall V. Simmons, Jr., to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Michael D. Wickman, to be Brigadier General.

Army nominations beginning with Brig. Gen. Carl A. Alex and ending with Brig. Gen. Brian E. Winski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 24, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Col. Susan K. Arnold and ending with Col. Robert P. Huston, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Army nomination of Col. Richard J. Lebel, to be Brigadier General.

Army nomination of Col. Todd W. Lewis, to be Brigadier General.

Army nominations beginning with Col. George N. Appenzeller and ending with Col. Telita Crosland, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 8, 2017.

Marine Corps nomination of Maj. Gen. Steven R. Rudder, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Maj. Gen. Laura J. Richardson, to be Lieutenant General.

Army nomination of Brig. Gen. Charles N. Pede, to be Lieutenant General.

Navy nomination of Rear Adm. Phillip G. Sawyer, to be Vice Admiral.

Marine Corps nomination of Maj. Gen. Brian D. Beaudreault, to be Lieutenant General.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, for the Committee on Armed Services I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDs on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Air Force nomination of James E. Thompson, to be Colonel.

Air Force nomination of Johanna K. Ream, to be Major.

Air Force nominations beginning with Paul R. Aguirre and ending with Peter Lawrence Zalewski, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Army nomination of Kalie K. Rott, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Norma A. Hill, to be Major.

Army nomination of Frank C. Pescatello, Jr., to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Basim M. Younis, to be Major.

Army nomination of Stanley F. Gould, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Scott W. Fisher, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with Gary L. Beaty and ending with Michael A. M. Wilson, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 24, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Daniel J. Convey and ending with Philip A. Horton, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 24, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Sophia Dalce and ending with Burke Lenz, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 24, 2017.

Army nomination of Dawn E. Elliott, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of D012528, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Benjamin W. Hillner, to be Major.

Army nomination of Celina S. Pargo, to be Major.

Army nomination of Paul R. Ambrose, to be Major.

Army nominations beginning with James L. Dungca and ending with Nathan S. Lanham, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on April 24, 2017.

Army nomination of Charles R. Burnett, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Pablo F. Diaz, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Craig A. Nazareth, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Brian C. McLean, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Raymond C. Casteline, to be Major.

Army nomination of Daniel J. Shank, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Christopher W. Degn, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Jason T. Kidder, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Tito M. Villanueva, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Philip J. Dacunto, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nomination of Stephen R. November, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Luisa Santiago, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Robert J. Bonner, to be Colonel.

Army nomination of Mohamad El Samad, to be Major.

Army nomination of Lana J. Bernat, to be Major.

Army nomination of Patrick K. Sullivan, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Army nominations beginning with Derek L. Adams and ending with James M. Yates, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Rodney Abrams and ending with D010081, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Army nominations beginning with Christine N. Adams and ending with Charlette K. Woodard, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Mark S. Jimison and ending with Shawn P. Wonderlich, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 27, 2017.

Marine Corps nomination of Jason G. Lacis, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Kevin J. Goodwin, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Javier E. Vega, to be Lieutenant Colonel.

Marine Corps nomination of Sergio L. Sandoval, to be Major.

Marine Corps nomination of Michael S. Stevens, to be Major.

Marine Corps nomination of Patrick J. Mullen, to be Major.

Marine Corps nominations beginning with Raymond L. Adams and ending with Douglas S. Woodhams, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on May 10, 2017.

Navy nomination of Susan M. McGarvey, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Sheila I. Almendras-Flaherty, to be Commander.

Navy nomination of Adrian D. Ragland, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Christopher R. Desena, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Kenneth L. Demick, Jr., to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Michael C. Bratley, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Evan M. Colbert, to be Commander.

Navy nomination of Luciana Sung, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of William A. Schultz, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of William L. McCoy, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Chris F. White, to be Captain.

Navy nomination of Karl M. Kingry, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Michael A. Polito, to be Commander.

Navy nomination of Raymond J. Carlson, Jr., to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Christopher M. Allen, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of Aaron L. Witherspoon, to be Lieutenant Commander.

Navy nomination of John E. Fritz, to be Captain.

By Mr. CRAPO for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

*Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes.

*Heath P. Tarbert, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

*Mira Radielovic Ricardel, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration.

*Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, Department of the Treasury.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1202. A bill to modify the boundary of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1203. A bill to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a program under which the Administrator shall defer the designation of an area as a nonattainment area for purposes of the 8-hour ozone national ambient air quality standard if the area achieves and maintains certain standards under a voluntary early action compact plan; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. MCCASKILL (for herself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 1204. A bill to authorize the United States Postal Service to carry out emergency suspensions of post offices in accordance with certain procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 1205. A bill to authorize the establishment of American Dream Accounts; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. KING (for himself and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1206. A bill to ensure fair treatment in licensing requirements for the export of certain echinoderms; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. ERNST, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SASSE, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. ROBERTS):

S. 1207. A bill to amend the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 with respect to the application of the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure rule to certain farms, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. PERDUE, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND):

S. 1208. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to provide for an option under the Secure Mail Initiative under which a person to whom a document is sent under that initiative may elect to have the United States Postal Service use the Hold for Pickup service or the Signature Confirmation service in delivering the document, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. COTTON, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 1209. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the amount of special pension for Medal of Honor recipients, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 58

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 58, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on high cost employer-sponsored health coverage.

S. 59

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 59, a bill to provide that silencers be treated the same as long guns.

S. 196

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 196, a bill to provide for a Public Health Emergency Fund, and for other purposes.

S. 203

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 203, a bill to reaffirm that the Environmental Protection Agency may not regulate vehicles used solely for competition, and for other purposes.

S. 322

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 322, a bill to protect victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, and dating violence from emotional and psychological trauma caused by acts of violence or threats of violence against their pets.

S. 374

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 374, a bill to enable concrete masonry products manufacturers to establish, finance, and carry out a coordinated program of research, education, and promotion to improve, maintain, and develop markets for concrete masonry products.

S. 379

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) were added as cosponsors of S. 379, a bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to eliminate the five month waiting period for disability insurance benefits under such title for individuals with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

S. 407

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 407, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 470

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 470, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to enhance the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit and make the credit fully refundable.

S. 479

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 479, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to waive coinsurance under Medicare for colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of whether therapeutic intervention is required during the screening.

S. 602

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 602, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to include automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as section 179 property and classify certain automated fire sprinkler system retrofits as 15-year property for purposes of depreciation.

S. 720

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 720, a bill to amend the Export Administration Act of 1979 to include in the prohibitions on boycotts against allies of the United States boycotts fostered by international governmental organizations against Israel and to direct the Export-Import Bank of the United States to oppose boycotts against Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 722

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 722, a bill to impose sanctions with respect to Iran in relation to Iran's ballistic missile program, support for acts of international terrorism, and violations of human rights, and for other purposes.

S. 778

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. HASSAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 778, a bill to require the use of prescription drug monitoring programs and to facilitate information sharing among States.

S. 782

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 782, a bill to reauthorize the National Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program, and for other purposes.

S. 798

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 798, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the Yellow Ribbon G.I. Education Enhancement Program to apply to individuals pursuing programs of education while on active duty, to recipients of the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry scholarship, and to programs of education pursued on half-time basis or less, and for other purposes.

S. 829

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 829, a bill to reauthorize the Assistance to Firefighters Grants program, the Fire Prevention and Safety Grants program, and the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 896

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 896, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 912

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 912, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to establish a free on-line tax preparation and filing service and programs that allow taxpayers to access third-party provided tax return information.

S. 926

At the request of Mrs. ERNST, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 926, a bill to authorize the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to establish the National Global War on Terrorism Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes.

S. 976

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 976, a bill to restore States' sovereign rights to enforce State and local sales and use tax laws, and for other purposes.

S. 989

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the names of the Senator from New York

(Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 989, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of pediatric subspecialists in the National Health Service Corps program, and for other purposes.

S. 1016

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1016, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to telehealth services, and for other purposes.

S. 1073

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1073, a bill to authorize Escambia County, Florida, to convey certain property that was formerly part of Santa Rosa Island National Monument and that was conveyed to Escambia County subject to restrictions on use and reconveyance.

S. 1094

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1094, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 1113

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1113, a bill to amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to ensure the safety of cosmetics.

S. 1126

At the request of Mr. STRANGE, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1126, a bill to prohibit certain Federal funds from being available to sanctuary jurisdictions that refuse to cooperate with the Federal Government on immigration matters or retaliate against border security contractors, and for other purposes.

S. 1136

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1136, a bill to improve the structure of the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1158

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1158, a bill to help prevent acts of genocide and other atrocity crimes, which threaten national and international security, by enhancing United States Government capacities to prevent, mitigate, and respond to such crises.

S. 1182

At the request of Mr. YOUNG, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1182, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint commemorative coins in recognition of the 100th anniversary of The American Legion.

S. RES. 106

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 106, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate to support the territorial integrity of Georgia.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. COTTON (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1202. A bill to modify the boundary of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, September will mark the 60th anniversary of the Little Rock Nine, the nine African-American students who enrolled in the then-all-white Little Rock Central High School in 1957. Ask anyone who lived through the crisis, and they will tell you they remember it vividly. They may not have been there in person, but they remember the photos, those searing images of an angry mob, the stoic students, the bayoneted troops, all gathering in a high school, of all places.

Perhaps the most searing image is of Elizabeth Eckford, one of the nine who was then only 15 years old. She didn't get word that the other students were going as a group. She went alone in a simple black-and-white dress she had made just for the occasion. The mob baited her, menaced her, cursed her, some threatened to lynch her. She later said of her walk to the school's entrance: ''It was the longest block I've ever walked in my whole life.''

I think it is of the highest importance that we preserve their story and share it with our kids. It is a reminder of pretty sad times in our history and, more important, of the courage shown by nine young Arkansans, who helped our State and our Nation overcome deep-seated prejudices by appealing to the better angels of our nature.

We preserve historic battlefields like Yorktown and Gettysburg because we want our children to know what it took to gain and keep our freedom—the sacrifices made, the hardships endured. Equally important is preserving historic sites like Central High, where our citizens began the long road to freedom from oppression and intolerance.

That is why we made Central High School a historic site years ago, though with one oversight. There are seven homes across the street from the school. Their exteriors were in many of the pictures that are now so famous. There has long been a movement to preserve those exteriors so future generations will be able to see Central High exactly as it looked when the Little Rock Nine arrived to school.

I am proud to say that today I am introducing a bill with three of my colleagues—the senior Senator of Vermont PAT LEAHY, Congressman FRENCH HILL of Little Rock, and civil rights legend Congressman JOHN LEWIS—that would do just that. It would extend the boundary of the Central High historical site to include these seven homes.

It would add about an acre and a half to the park, although I should say this bill would not authorize the Federal Government to take ownership of the homes and wouldn't allow the National Park Service to buy them in the future. Instead, it would simply encourage the homeowners and National Park Service to work together to preserve these homes so future generations could see them and learn from them. That is one reason our bill has the support of the homeowners, the Central High Neighborhood Association, and my State's historic preservation advocacy group, Preserve Arkansas. All three have written to me to express support for the bill. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have their letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

CENTRAL HIGH NEIGHBORHOOD INC.

May 16, 2017.

U.S. Senator TOM COTTON,
ATTN: Lisa Harst,
Washington DC.

DEAR SENATOR COTTON: On behalf of the Central High Neighborhood, Inc. (CHNI), I would like to express support for your proposed legislation that would move the boundary of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site to include seven properties across the street from the high school.

CHNI is proud to support this initiative, which would recognize the historical significance of seven homes located on the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Park Street. The boundary adjustment encourages proper care and preservation of these homes by allowing property owners, on a case by case basis, to enter into cooperative agreements with the National Park Service.

CHNI understands that property owners will maintain rightful ownership and that the Park Service has no intention to purchase the homes neither now, nor in the future.

CHNI would like to thank you for your work on this very important issue and hopes you will remain engaged with us as your bill advances through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

WHITNEY PATTERSON,
President, on behalf of Central High Neighborhood, Inc.

PRESERVE ARKANSAS,

May 4, 2017.

MS. LISA B. HARST,
Legislative Assistant, U.S. Senator Tom Cotton, Washington, DC.

DEAR MS. HARST: My name is Rachel Patton, and I am the executive director of Preserve Arkansas, Arkansas's statewide historic preservation advocacy group. On behalf of our board of directors, I am writing to support the proposed expansion of the Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site boundary to include the seven homes across the street from the high school. This

simple boundary adjustment will encourage the preservation of the seven historic homes in the 1400 and 1500 blocks of Park Street and allow homeowners, on a case by case basis, to enter cooperative agreements with the National Park Service while retaining private property ownership.

We feel that this is an important step in the right direction for the Central High School Neighborhood Historic District as a whole. Please let me know if I may provide further assistance with this initiative.

Sincerely,

RACHEL PATTON,
Executive Director.

From: Patricia McGraw.
Subject: Washington Heritage House.
To Whom It May Concern: City Officials

DEAR MS. HARST: We, the owners of the properties, addresses listed above, located directly across Park Street in front of the famous and renowned educational facility, Little Rock Central High School, wish to express our gratitude and appreciation of all that you do for our neighborhood, our city, and our state, particularly in learning that the National Park Service wishes to expand their boundaries to include our seven houses. It is our belief that our houses add to the beauty and dignity of the structural and environmental beauty, dignity, and grace to this area of Little Rock.

In that we are greatly interested in the continuous celebrated dignity of this site, we are very supportive of direction to expand upon this historic city development, and we appreciate our being included in this significant idea. Please continue to keep us abreast of new developments and ideas which we intend to implement as wished by the city officials, and intend to seek funding to make this dream of our foreparents to come true.

Thanks again for including us, and please take care of yourselves and our city. Love and Deep Appreciation For All That You Do:

Sincerely,

DR. PATRICIA WASHINGTON MCGRAW,
MRS. GRACE BLAGDON,
OTHER CONCERNED OWNERS.

Mr. COTTON. There is widespread agreement in the community and in our State that this site is not just a part of Arkansas' history, it is a part of our national heritage.

Central High stands as a reminder of an article Billy Graham published during the crisis, ''No Color Line in Heaven.'' It was a hard-won lesson and one I think we should do everything we can to pass on to the next generation.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I have 8 requests for committees to meet during today's session of the Senate. They have the approval of the majority and minority leaders.

Pursuant to rule XXVI, paragraph 5(a), of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the following committees are authorized to meet during today's session of the Senate:

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 9:30 a.m., in open session, to receive testimony on worldwide threats.

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

The Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 10 a.m., to conduct an executive session to vote on the following nominations: Ms. Sigal Mandelker, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, U.S. Department of the Treasury; Ms. Mira Radielovic Ricardel, to be Under Secretary for Export Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce; Mr. Marshall Billingslea, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, U.S. Department of the Treasury; and Mr. Heath Tarbert, to be Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Committee on Foreign Relations is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Senate Select Committee on Intelligence is authorized to meet during the session of the 115th Congress of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017 from 2:15 p.m.–4 p.m., in room SH–219 of the Senate Hart Office Building to hold a closed member briefing.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

The Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in closed session, to receive a briefing on Navy readiness challenges, emerging threats, and the requirements underpinning the 355-Ship Force Structure Objective.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SPACE, SCIENCE AND COMPETITIVENESS

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation is authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

The Committee will hold a Subcommittee Hearing on ''Reopening the American Frontier: Exploring How the Outer Space Treaty Will Impact American Commerce and Settlement in Space.''

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

The Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Making Implementation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ground-Level Ozone Attainable: Legislative Hearing on S. 263 and S. 452.''

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

The Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration, is authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Building America's Trust Through Border Security: Progress on the Southern Border.''

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10 a.m., Wednesday, May 24; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; finally, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Sullivan nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senator DURBIN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Democratic whip.

MANCHESTER ATTACK

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset that I offer my condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed or injured in last night's despicable attack at a concert in Manchester, England. Details are still coming in, but this looks like an act of terror in the heart of one of our key European allies. America is joining with the people of Great Britain in expressing our sorrow and sadness over the loss of these lives and the injuries that were sustained.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on a separate note, it has been more than 5 months since the intelligence agencies in the United States reached a solid consensus on a critical issue. The agencies presented to the American people 5 months ago their damning assessment that Russia actively tried to interfere in our last Presidential election to help elect someone they thought would be a better friend to the Russian interests.

I think it is important to recall some of the key findings by our own intelligence agencies on a virtually unanimous basis. They said:

> Russian efforts to influence the 2016 U.S. presidential election represent the most recent expression of Moscow's longstanding desire to undermine the U.S.-led liberal democratic order, but these activities demonstrate a significant escalation in directness, level of activity, and scope of effort compared to previous operations.

We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the U.S. presidential election.

Our intelligence agencies went on to say:

Russia's goals were to undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency. We further assess that Putin and the Russian government developed a clear preference for President-elect Trump.

Moscow will apply lessons learned from its Putin-ordered campaign aimed at the U.S. presidential election to future influence efforts worldwide, including against U.S. allies and their election processes.

We have never seen anything like this in our history—nothing. What Vladimir Putin did—or tried to do—is staggering, momentous, and something we should not ignore. A foreign adversary intentionally manipulating America's democracy and election to try to get a result friendly to Russia but not consistent with American public opinion—that was his goal.

The dictionary defines an act of war as ''an act of aggression by a country against another with which it is nominally at peace.''

Was the Russia attack on our election an act of war? Is sure seems close to the definition. At a minimum, it was an act of cyber war against America and an attack on our democracy. It should not go unanswered. Troublingly, there have been few answers forthcoming from this President and this Congress.

What did the White House and the majority party in Congress do to respond to this act of cyber war to protect against any future attacks? Virtually nothing. As more and more questions have emerged about possible collusion between the Trump campaign and these Russian actions against our election, possible Russian money, and the President's business interests, and troubling ties between those close to Trump and the Russians, this President has instead been trying to endear himself to the Russians, incredibly.

That is right. On May 10, he had a closed meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister and Ambassador in which the President reportedly boasted about sensitive intelligence and—this is truly incredible—also boasted about firing our Nation's FBI Director to relieve the ''great pressure'' on him over the Russia investigation.

In fact, he reportedly told the Russians:

I just fired the head of the FBI. He was crazy, a real nut job . . . I faced great pressure because of Russia. That's taken off . . . I'm not under investigation.

That is the end of the attributed quote to the President of the United States.

Let that sink in for a moment. The President of the United States was bragging to the same people who attacked our election and democracy that he had fired the top law enforcement officer investigating that attack. That is incredible, both for its obvious appearance of obstruction of justice but also for what should have so obviously been said in that meeting instead.

President Trump, instead of a frivolous exchange with a dictatorial regime that attacked our Nation, should have had as his first message to the Russians the obvious: Do not ever interfere in our elections or those of our allies again or you will face serious consequences—end of meeting.

Then the President should have come out and related this conversation to the American press and to the American people.

Instead, the President let the Russians bring their own official photographer from the TASS Soviet news agency into the Oval Office and—get this—excluded all of the American press—just the friendly Russian cameras. Then, the Russians gleefully sent out victory tweets of the President's warm and friendly greeting.

This is totally upside down. Yet it only gets worse. Stunningly, it was just revealed Monday night that President Trump asked two of the Nation's top intelligence officials in March to help him push back against the FBI investigation into possible collusion between his campaign and the Russian Government.

The Washington Post reported that President Trump made separate appeals to the Director of National Intelligence, Dan Coats, and the Director of the National Security Agency, Admiral Mike Rogers. Coats and Rogers both rightly refused to comply with President Trump's request, properly deemed as an inappropriate request from the President of the United States to leaders of our intelligence-gathering community. I applaud the respect of these two men for our democratic norms and system of government and the rejection of the President's reckless, selfish request.

This is breathtaking—an American President running from the Russians to our Nation's top law enforcement agency to our intelligence community, bizarrely pleading innocence on a matter of grave national security and trying to undermine ongoing investigations.

Former CIA General Counsel Jeffrey Smith said Trump's deeply troubling effort is an echo of President Nixon's ''unsuccessful effort to use the CIA to shut down the FBI's investigation of the Watergate break-in on national security grounds'' and, in his words, these actions were ''an appalling abuse of power.''

I had argued that Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein should either appoint a special counsel to look at the allegations of collusion between the Trump campaign and the Russians or tender his resignation. I said this after he was set up by the Trump administration to write a memo explaining the firing of James Comey as Director of the FBI and giving as his reason to protect the honor and integrity of Hillary Clinton during the campaign.

That was a laughable assertion.

Rosenstein wrote it. For at least 24 hours, that was the official line from the Trump White House. Then, there was the Lester Holt interview on NBC, and the President came out and said: I wanted to get rid of him months ago; I wanted to put an end to this Russian thing.

I am pleased that Mr. Rosenstein made the right decision when he appointed former FBI Director Robert Mueller to fill the special counsel role.

Back in the year 2001, that ominous year of 9/11, I first met Robert Mueller. He was the Director of the FBI. We worked together on some important issues relative to the FBI. I came to respect him very much. He is a decorated veteran of the Vietnam war, where he served as an officer in the Marine Corps, a former Federal judge, a man of the opposite political faith, but a man who clearly loves his country above party, whenever he is asked. He is a man who has not only risen to the challenge of public service but who has excelled to the point where his term as Director of the FBI was extended—a rarity around Washington and, certainly, on a bipartisan basis almost unthinkable these days. But it happened with Robert Mueller. It happened because he is smart, he is principled, and he loves his country, and we know it. I don't think Rod Rosenstein could have chosen a better person.

I don't know if I will ultimately agree with his investigation of this critical issue, but I will respect his findings, whatever they may be, because I know that they are heartfelt, sincere, and principled.

While this special counsel investigation will be critical, it is not a substitute, however, for continued congressional action, as well, as some have suggested or perhaps hoped. I know the Senate Intelligence Committee is actively pursuing this matter, and I salute them for that effort, but I think we need to think about more. We need to think about an independent commission—a bipartisan, transparent commission—to deal with policy questions. For instance, what are we going to face from the Russians in the next election? What did we learn in the last election to protect ourselves?

The special counsel is going to focus on whether crimes were committed, but I am deeply concerned that there may be matters related to Russia's attack that may not involve crimes themselves but should be made public to the American people. It is Congress's responsibility, just as it was after the September 11 tragedy, to make sure the American people know as much as possible in a democracy. That is how it works.

Former Watergate investigator Scott Armstrong made this point in an op-ed in Sunday's New York Times. He pointed out how a select congressional committee and a special prosecutor overcame partisan and jurisdictional conflicts to get to the truth during Watergate. He noted:

A mature special prosecutor and a well-led congressional inquiry can coordinate over issues like witness immunity. Congress can creatively expand its witness list beyond prosecution targets and fill in critical details from satellite witnesses . . . If the committee is aggressive and truly bipartisan, it can not only educate and reassure the public, but also legislate solutions to prevent future abuses.

There are a lot of parallels between the Watergate era and what we face today, but, sadly, one major difference from the Nixon era to the Trump era is the willingness of members of the President's own party to stand up and speak out.

Back in Nixon's day, there came a moment when a handful of Senators from this Chamber changed history, and one of them was Barry Goldwater. He met with President Nixon and he said: There are only so many lies you can take, and now there has been one too many.

Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania joined him, as well as another Republican—John Rhodes, a Republican leader in the House. They made it clear to President Nixon that what he had done was unacceptable by any standard and they would no longer stand by him. It took courage for them to do that. The President saw the writing on the wall, and he resigned.

We are looking for similar leadership today from both sides of the aisle—not just Democrats but Republicans as well—to stand up and defend our democracy from Putin's interference.

There have been months of relative inaction. It is clear that the President is not going to stand up to Russia. It is time for all of us—Democrats and Republicans in Congress—to act for the good of this Nation and get to the truth of what happened and make sure Russia can never do this to our democracy again.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Trump administration released its fiscal year 2018 budget this morning. For all the talk on the campaign trail of standing up for the forgotten Americans in this country, the President's budget takes aim at the exact programs that many rely on. From healthcare and food stamps to student loans and disability, President Trump's budget is nothing less than an assault on seniors, low-income Americans, children, and the disabled.

The President's budget calls for more than $3.6 trillion in cuts to Federal spending over the next 10 years, with more than $1 trillion of these cuts coming from some of the most vital programs in our Nation's social safety net. Nothing is more essential to our Nation's low-income, disabled, and elderly Americans than Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP. But the President's budget slashes more than $600 billion from Medicaid, despite the President's repeated promises on the campaign trail to protect the program. More than 3 million people in my State—20 percent of the people who live there—currently depend on the Medicaid Program for healthcare, including 1.5 million children and more than 300,000 seniors and disabled people.

The budget cuts $193 billion from SNAP by making it harder for people to qualify for this assistance in putting food on the table. Forty-four million children, disabled, and low-income people around the country accessed food through the SNAP program last year.

Also weakened in the President's budget is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant that helps States provide financial assistance to families who are literally struggling to survive. And the budget cuts about 20 percent of funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, providing health insurance for poor children. Isn't that incredible? The President doesn't believe that is a priority—health insurance for poor children.

It is often said that the President's budget reflects our values, and this budget shows that President Trump clearly values tax cuts for the upper income individuals in America over the lives of poor and middle-class Americans.

The President's budget also includes historic cuts in nondefense discretionary spending. Over the next 10 years, President Trump proposes to cut domestic spending so significantly that spending on defense would exceed spending on domestic priorities by almost $300 billion. To pay for an increase in defense spending and to build his big, beautiful wall, the President would slash funding from programs essential to hard-working Americans—programs that support affordable housing, home heating bills, Meals on Wheels, student loans, clean drinking water, preserving the Great Lakes, early childhood education, and infrastructure.

Even medical research is on the Trump chopping block. President Trump has proposed cutting one-fifth of the budget for the National Institutes of Health, including $1 billion from the National Cancer Institute. President Obama, with Vice President Biden, with strong bipartisan support, put together a moonshot—a Cancer Moonshot—to do something significant in cancer research. President Trump's budget virtually eliminates it.

NIH has helped cut U.S. cancer death rates by 11 percent in women and 19 percent in men. It has helped ensure HIV/AIDS is no longer a death sentence. It contributed to the near eradication of polio and smallpox, but make no mistake, these changes didn't just happen. They occurred because of sustained Federal investment in medical research.

I salute my colleague on the other side of the aisle, ROY BLUNT, the Appropriations subcommittee chair when it comes to NIH. For 2 straight years now, 2 fiscal years, he has given more than 5 percent real growth in NIH spending. I have praised him on the floor and back home and publicly over and over again. That Republican Senator, and many Democratic Senators, stood together because we believe in medical research. The Trump budget does not.

We cannot afford these devastating cuts, and we can't afford to sit on our hands and face the millions of families across America who count on us to have the right priorities. Clearly, the President's budget is far from a new foundation for American greatness. This budget would have a devastating impact on Americans most in need of a helping hand, on everything from healthcare to food access, to quality education and affordable housing.

They always say the President's budget is dead on arrival. This budget, I hope, will be dead on arrival. It doesn't deserve the light of day or a breath of life.

We need to come together, as we did in this year's budget, on a bipartisan basis, order the priorities that America sent us to prioritize, and then work together to pass it. I hope it is done on a bipartisan basis. That is what America wants, both parties to work together. We can do it. We did it for this fiscal year. We can do it for the next, but our first step in reaching an agreement is to make sure there is a sound rejection of President Trump's budget. His budget will not make America great again.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 6:18 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, May 24, 2017, at 10 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

FORT MYERS HIGH SOFTBALL TEAM—FIRST STATE TITLE

HON. FRANCIS ROONEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. FRANCIS ROONEY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Fort Myers High School's softball team and their first state championship in program history. The Green Wave struck a decisive victory over the Niceville Eagles by a margin of 7–1. This triumph merely closes an already excellent year for the high school's athletic program where they collectively won two team state titles and six individual championships. All this was done while maintaining excellent academic standards.

I congratulate the Fort Myers Green Wave and Head Coach Johnny Manetta for this most cherished win. We look forward to seeing what this young team will accomplish in the years to come.

HONORING THE PHILADELPHIA ORCHESTRA

HON. BRENDAN F. BOYLE

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and proud Philadelphian.

Today, the world famous Philadelphia Orchestra departs for a three country tour of Asia. In these uncertain times as my colleagues and I focus on East Asia, I think we can all agree that the Philadelphia Orchestra is a critical tool in the diplomatic toolbox.

Working with our diplomats at the Department of State and with Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf's Department of Community and Economic Development, over 150 Pennsylvania musicians, non-profit and business leaders will travel to China, Mongolia and Korea.

In China, they will celebrate 45 years since President Richard Nixon and Secretary Henry Kissinger personally requested that they open bilateral relations for our two countries. They will engage in innovative people to people diplomacy.

In Mongolia, they will celebrate 30 years of U.S.–Mongolia bilateral relations. They are the first western orchestra to visit this proud democracy who often labels the United States its "third neighbor." I was honored when the President of Mongolia visited Philadelphia in September 2016.

The trip to Korea has taken on added importance this year. The delegation will include proud Korean Americans who are constituents of mine. Philadelphia and Incheon are Sister Cities. My district is home to a vibrant Korean-American community that has made successful contributions to the area. Large public concerts and events in Korea will demonstrate for the world to see the unbreakable bond between our two countries.

As we focus our attention on the geopolitics of East Asia, I think we can all agree that this tour could not come at a more important time.

16TH DISTRICT CONGRESSIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARDS

HON. VERN BUCHANAN

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. BUCHANAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to law enforcement men and women who have provided distinctive service to the people of Florida's 16th Congressional District.

Law enforcement is a demanding profession that requires sacrifice, courage and a dedication to serve others. Every day, brave men and women put themselves in harm's way to enforce the laws of our society and protect public safety. They deserve our gratitude and respect.

Six years ago, I established the 16th District Congressional Law Enforcement Awards, CLEA, to give special recognition to law enforcement officers, departments, or units for exceptional achievement. This year, I will present congressional law enforcement awards to the following winners chosen by an independent panel comprised of current and retired law enforcement personnel representing a cross-section of the district's law enforcement community:

Officer Jason Nuttall of the Bradenton Police Department will receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

Captain John Walsh, Captain Debra Kaspar, Lieutenant Jon Varley, Community Affairs Director Kaitlyn Perez, Deputy Phillip Mockler, Detective Tim Speth and Investigator Lynn Thomson of the Sarasota County Sheriff's Office will receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

Detective Richard Wilson of the Palmetto Police Department will receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

Officer Alan Bores of the Holmes Beach Police Department will receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

Detective James Warren of the Manatee County Sheriff's Office will receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

Sergeant Robert Armstrong of the Sarasota Police Department will receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

Deputy Kevin Smetana of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office will receive the Dedication and Professionalism Award.

Master Sergeant George Taunton of the Florida Highway Patrol will receive the Career Service Award.

Troopers Caleb Kerr and Brett Fitzpatrick of the Florida Highway Patrol will receive the Preservation of Life Award.

Sergeant Patrick Roberts of the Florida Highway Patrol will receive the Above and Beyond the Call of Duty Award.

Pastor Patrick Miller, Pastor Vincent Smith, Doctor Harriet Moore, Geoffry Gilot and Al-Muta Hawks all affiliated with the Boys and Girls Club of Sarasota will receive the Associate Service Award.

The Manatee County Special Investigations Division will receive the Unit Citation Award. The members of this unit are: Major William Jordan, Captain Todd Shear, Lieutenant Anthony Carr, Division Secretary Toni Burton, Administrative Assistant Cindy Hoffman, Sergeant Jason Powell, Detective James Parrish, Detective Kim Zink, Detective Greg Dunlap, Detective Mike Diaz, Bruce Benjamin (Crime Stoppers), Amber Hoffman (Manager), Erica Chenard (UCR Coordinator), Criminal Analyst Ashley Eannarino, Criminal Analyst Elicia Main, Intel Analyst Don Brown, Criminal Analyst John Ferrito, Intel Analyst Elizabeth Thomas, Sergeant Evelio Perez, Detective Joseph Petta, Detective Justin Warren, Detective Derek Pollock, Detective Eric Davis, Detective Ray Richter, Detective Patrick Thames, Detective Scott Williamson, Sergeant Gary Combee, Detective William Freel, Detective Maria Gillum, Detective Bryce Wilhelm, Detective Jonathan Kruse, Sergeant Steve Barron, Detective Randall Walker, Detective Brian Beck, Detective Shayne Rousseau, Detective Jeremy Martin, Detective Robert Brigham, Sergeant Isaac Redmond, Detective Rafael Ortegon, Detective Christopher Gallagher, Detective Joel Taylor, Detective David Bocchino, and Detective Lourdes Santiago.

THIN BLUE LINE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SUZANNE BONAMICI

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 18, 2017

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 115, the Thin Blue Line Act. This bill unnecessarily expands the federal death penalty, and does not further the laudable goal of bringing justice to the law enforcement officers who make the ultimate sacrifice for our safety and security.

The United States is in the minority of countries that still use the death penalty, and Americans' opposition to it has increased in recent decades, particularly as social scientists better understand the disparate effects of the death penalty on minority populations. A sentence of death is disproportionately used in cases involving defendants of color. According to U.S. Department of Justice, in 2011, 41.7 percent of all death row inmates were African American, despite only making up 13.1 percent of the population. Furthermore, since 1973, 159 people who were sentenced to death were later exonerated. There is no doubt that innocent individuals have been put to death in the United States—a fact that must

not be ignored in a country that values justice under the law.

I greatly respect and appreciate our law enforcement community. Local police, firefighters, and first responders put their lives on the line every single day to protect people in Oregon and across the country. Those criminals who target and murder police officers have no place in our society. Nothing in current law prevents those individuals from being prosecuted to the highest extent of the law, and to receive a sentence of death. Under current law, there are 16 aggravating factors that can be considered during criminal sentencing, and the federal government can allege the targeting or killing of a law enforcement officer—federal, state, or local—as an aggravating factor when considering the death penalty. This bill creates a 17th aggravating factor that is duplicative of existing law.

I will continue to do all I can to support our law enforcement officers, particularly the admirable men and women who serve our communities in northwest Oregon. This bill, however, is an unnecessary expansion of the death penalty, and I therefore cannot support it.

CLIFFS NATURAL RESOURCES—170 YEARS OF MINING

HON. RICHARD M. NOLAN

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a significant milestone achieved by a great American company and one of the largest employers in my district, Cliffs Natural Resources Inc. In 2017, Cliffs is celebrating its 170th year as an independent mining company specializing in the extraction and processing of iron ore—or taconite as it is known on Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range.

Cliffs Natural Resources was founded in 1847 in Cleveland, Ohio and first began operating on the Mesabi Iron Range in 1905 at the former Crosby Mine located near Nashwauk, Minnesota. Today, Cliffs is the oldest metals and mining company traded on the New York Stock Exchange and the largest independent producer of iron ore pellets in the United States. As a company that was founded prior to the industrial revolution, Cliffs has weathered the ups and downs of the American economy and the cyclical nature of the steel business for 170 years. This achievement is nothing short of remarkable.

Throughout its long history, Cliffs has been an integral supplier of raw materials to the domestic steel industry, providing the iron ore used in the production of steel that supports our American way of life and provides for the defense of this great country. Cliffs stands at the very foundation of our steel industry and America's manufacturing economy.

Just as notable is Cliffs' commitment to Northeastern Minnesota. Overall Cliffs employs approximately 2,900 people in the United States, with over 1,700 family-sustaining jobs across its three Minnesota iron ore operations—United Taconite, Northshore Mining Company and Hibbing Taconite. In 2016, Cliffs' economic impact in the state of Minnesota was nearly $900 million. Furthermore, Cliffs has shown itself to be a tremendous supporter of its home communities, with the company and its employees contributing over $575,000 to charitable organizations in Minnesota last year alone.

The domestic iron ore and steel industries have confronted grave challenges in recent years as historic levels of illegally-dumped steel flooded U.S. shores. These trade law violations led to the idling of iron ore mines, steel mills and the lay-off of thousands of workers, including 2,000 Minnesota iron ore miners. In 2015, at the height of the steel import crisis, I found a friend and partner in Cliffs' Chairman, President and CEO, Mr. Lourenco Goncalves. This was not the first trade-induced steel disaster that Cliffs had endured and Mr. Goncalves understood that it would take the support and engagement of the White House to fully address and remedy the threat posed by record levels of illegal steel imports. Lourenco pledged to me that, if the federal government would commit to prosecuting the trade cases to the full extent of our U.S. trade laws, he would bring back workers at Cliffs' idled Minnesota mines. In conjunction with Minnesota's other elected officials, we were able to capture the attention of President Obama's Administration, resulting in tariffs and duties assessed in excess of 500 percent on steel products from certain countries, namely China. Mr. Goncalves followed through on his commitment to put nearly 1,000 Minnesota miners back to work and it was my pleasure to join Cliffs in August of 2016 as the company broke ground on a $75 million capital investment in new pellet-making capabilities at United Taconite in Forbes, Minnesota.

I commend Cliffs Natural Resources, Mr. Goncalves and all of Cliffs' employees for stewarding Cliffs through the latest challenging chapter in your company's long and storied history. This 170-year anniversary stands as a testament to the hard work and dedication of past and present Cliffs' employees, from haul truck drivers and millwrights to the company's most senior executives. I am pleased to recognize the monumental contributions of this great company, both to the communities of Minnesota's Iron Range as well as to the prosperity and defense of the United States. In closing, I extend my best wishes for the continued success of Cliffs Natural Resources.

IN HONOR OF COLONEL JONATHAN HOWERTON

HON. ROB BISHOP

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Colonel Jonathan "Jon" Howerton, United States Army, for his extraordinary dedication to duty and selfless service to the United States of America. Colonel Howerton will be moving on from his present assignment as the Chief of the Army's Liaison Division to the United States House of Representatives where he served from April 1st, 2016 to June 1st, 2017 to become the Deputy Commander for Maneuver of the 2nd Infantry Division (Republic of Korea-United States Combined Division), Camp Casey, Republic of Korea.

The son of a career Army officer, Colonel Howerton grew up on posts, camps, and stations across the continental United States and in Europe. He was commissioned through the Reserve Officer Training Corps into the Field Artillery upon graduation from Texas Christian University in 1990. After his first assignment as a lieutenant, he commanded Field Artillery units at the Battery, Battalion and Brigade levels and has served in a variety of tactical, operational, and strategic level leadership and staff positions. He has extensive experience overseas including a previous assignment to Korea and one to Germany along with operational deployments to Bosnia-Herzegovina supporting Operation Joint Guard, and three to Iraq supporting both Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn. He has also been stationed at numerous military installations in the United States to include Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Hood, Texas; Fort Carson, Colorado; Schofield Barracks, Fort Shafter and Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii; and Washington, D.C.

Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to recognize Colonel Howerton's long and decorated career. On behalf of a grateful Nation, I ask my colleagues to join me today in recognizing and commending Colonel Howerton for a lifetime of service to his country, and for all he and his family have given and continue to give to our country. We are in their debt. We wish him, his wife Tricia, his daughter Baylor, and his son Cooper all the best as they continue their Army journey to the Republic of Korea.

CONGRATULATING THE CENTRAL CAROLINA HOMESCHOOLERS MOCK TRIAL TEAM

HON. MARK WALKER

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. WALKER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Central Carolina Homeschoolers (CCH) high school mock trial team. On May 13, 2017, the CCH mock trial team won the 2017 National High School Mock Trial Championship in Hartford, Connecticut. I, along with the rest of the Sixth District, express my sincere congratulations to this team.

Based in Randolph County, the CCH team is the first North Carolina school to win the National Championship in this annual competition. I am pleased to recognize Caitlin Kelly, Joshua Way, Jonah Moss, Heather Pennington, Allyn Sims, Madysen Bailey, Emily Polson and David Bainbridge Jr. for their diligence in accomplishing this exceptional feat. I would also like to acknowledge the team's coaches, Maria Bailey and Darren Allen, for their dedication to these students.

Once again, I congratulate the CCH mock trial team for this momentous accomplishment and wish these students much success in the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, on Roll Call Nos. 269 (motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended H.R. 1862), 270 (motion to suspend

the rules and pass, as amended H.R. 1842), and 273 (motion to suspend the rules and pass, as amended H.R. 2288) I did not cast my vote. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on all of these votes.

JOSEPH CARDENAS EARNS BOY SCOUT EAGLE RANK AWARD

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Joseph Cardenas of Pearland, TX, for earning his Boy Scout Eagle Rank Award.

Eagle Rank is the highest rank among Boy Scouts, requiring them to develop leadership, service and outdoor skills. To earn this distinguished award, Joseph had to achieve the Life Scout rank, earn 21 merit badges, and complete a service project. Joseph's service project was developing a brick memorial for veterans of all branches of the military. Individual and personalized bricks were laid at the VFW Pearland Memorial Post 7109 in Pearland.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Joseph Cardenas for earning his Boy Scout Eagle Rank Award. We are confident he will have continued success in his future endeavors. We are very proud.

COMMEMORATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY COLLEGE

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate San Joaquin Valley College (SJVC) on the occasion of their 40th anniversary. SJVC has educated over 25,000 students and started them on the path of successful careers. It is both fitting and appropriate that we honor SJVC's dedication and service to the community.

Founded on April 14, 1977, SJVC began with three students studying to become medical assistants. Shirley Perry, founder of SJVC, began as a medical assistant herself, in pursuit of certification. Through diligent studying on her own she became the first person to pass the certification test without schooling. Her impressive success was admired by many other medical assistants, seeking help from Shirley on their exams. This tutoring led to a teaching position at a community college. After three years, Shirley became unsatisfied with the schooling options and was inspired to establish the San Joaquin Valley College.

Robert Perry, Shirley's husband, left his job to handle the business aspects of the college. In 1995, the institution was accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges/Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. This accreditation allowed for SJVC to offer Associate of Science Degrees. The college now has 15 campuses located all over California, from Sacramento to San Diego.

San Joaquin Valley College offers 22 programs and will soon open its newest campus in downtown Porterville, CA. The institution has been passed down to Mike and Mark Perry, the sons of Shirley and Robert, and continues to provide education to students across California.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in commemorating San Joaquin Valley College's 40th Anniversary, along with the Perry family, for all of their hard work and accomplishments within the past forty years.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK PECHACEK, JR.

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Frank Pechacek, Jr. of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Frank recently retired from the Board of Directors of the Pottawattamie County Community Foundation after nine years of service.

Frank has been instrumental in his role with the Southwest Iowa Education Foundation, an affiliate of the Pottawattamie County Community Foundation. Under his leadership, the Pottawattamie County Community Foundation has seen substantial growth within the community. When Frank is not volunteering his time with the Foundation, he is a successful attorney at the Willson & Pechacek Law Firm.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Frank on his many years of dedicated and devoted service to the Pottawattamie County Community Foundation and Pottawattamie County. I am proud to represent him in the United States Congress and I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in congratulating Frank on his many accomplishments and in wishing him nothing but continued success.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JAMES B. RENACCI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. RENACCI. Mr. Speaker, I missed votes on Monday, May 22, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 269, H.R. 1862; and YEA on Roll Call No. 270, H.R. 1842.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BILL HUIZENGA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. HUIZENGA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today regarding missed votes due to family matters. Had I been present for roll call vote number 269, H.R. 1862, The Global Child Protection Act of 2017, I would have voted Yea. Had I been present for roll call vote number 270, H.R. 1842, The Strengthening Children's Safety Act of 2017, I would have voted Yea.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DAVID G. VALADAO

OF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, May 22, 2017, I missed votes due to unavoidable flight delays. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on roll call votes No. 269 and 270.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. CHRIS COLLINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. COLLINS of New York. Mr. Speaker, I was absent from votes May 22, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 269, and YEA on Roll Call No. 270.

IN RECOGNITION OF SAFE BOATING WEEK

HON. DORIS O. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Ms. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, today I stand to recognize Safe Boating Week beginning on May 20th and ending on May 27. I ask my colleagues to join me in drawing attention to this important issue and making water-based recreational activities safer and more enjoyable for all.

I would like to thank the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla 3–5 for hosting a Safe Boating and Water Safety Day in Sacramento on May 20. They will be holding demonstrations and presenting safety displays along the river water fronts for all families and residents in attendance. I believe that efforts such as these are crucial to reducing the number of boating-related deaths and injuries that occur each year.

Most boating accidents are preventable and occur because of human error, not because of environmental factors. In 2016, 266 boating accidents resulted in 150 injuries and 36 fatalities in Northern California alone. Many of these fatalities can be attributed to the victim not wearing a life jacket. We must make it explicitly known to the general public that today's life jackets are more affordable, more comfortable, and truly key to avoiding accidental drownings. Together, we must encourage all boaters to practice safe boating, attend safe boating classes, and live by the slogan "Wear It California!"

Mr. Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to join me in recognizing Safe Boating Week activities in West Sacramento.

IN SUPPORT OF TAIWAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support for Taiwan's participation in the World Health Organization (WHO).

For nearly a decade, Taiwan has participated as an invited observer at the World Health Assembly, the annual forum for the WHO. This invitation arrived late last year, due to political opposition to democratically-elected President Tsai Ing-wen. This year, no invitation was sent at all. Public health should be a politics-free issue and the WHO, a leading actor in reacting to global health crises, should remain a neutral, independent body which does not only serve the interest of any specific country.

As our world becomes increasingly connected and travel times to places around the globe are decreasing, communicable diseases have spread at an ever increasing pace. With its modem, world-class health system, Taiwan has been a leader in disease prevention, surveillance, quarantine, and treatment. It has been a key ally in the fights against many diseases, including SARS, avian flu, and Zika. Taiwan has shared its expertise and resources with people in South East Asia, and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, the World Health Assembly is an important event with worldwide attendance where global health policy is determined. Taiwan's medical expertise should be well represented. I encourage the administration to continue to help Taiwan's inclusion in the World Health Assembly and work together with their Taiwanese counterparts to strengthen the bilateral cooperation on health.

SIBYL WESTENHAVER NAMED KATY, TX, SENIOR OF THE YEAR

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Sibyl Westenhaver for being named as the 2017 City of Katy Senior of the Year.

Members of the Senior Citizens Center Advisory Board nominated two people to be named Katy's Senior of the Year and Mayor Fabol Hughes choose Sibyl. Sibyl began volunteering in her church's home delivered meals program in 2006. She helped transition the program to Interfaith Ministries' meals on wheels program. She moved to Katy from Oklahoma after losing her husband to be closer to her children and grandchildren. Not wanting to be a ''sit-at-home elderly person,'' Sibyl is known throughout the community and has created an extended family through her fellow volunteers and meal recipients. She's truly an inspiration.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Sibyl for being named the 2017 City of Katy Senior of the Year. She's helped countless people and we thank her for her help.

RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

HON. MARK POCAN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. POCAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of international students, scholars, and the U.S. institutions of higher education they attend who have been unfairly penalized by the administration's efforts to limit travel to our country. I urge my colleagues and the administration to recognize the vital contribution international students, scholars, and their families make when we welcome them to this great country.

International Education programs are incredibly important to the higher education experiences of students across the country. In particular, Title VI and Fulbright-Hays programs enable American undergraduate and graduate students to develop capabilities and proficiencies in languages and areas of the world that greatly benefit national security. At its core, Title VI strengthens the international teaching and curricula of students, introduces students to a wider, diverse world, and fosters their likelihood of pursuing an internationally focused profession. Similarly, the Fulbright-Hays program is an internationally focused program that awards grants to individual U.S. teachers, post-doctoral students, post-doctoral faculty, and U.S. institutions in order to support research and training efforts overseas focused on non-Western languages and areas of studies. The Title VI and the Fulbright-Hays programs form the vital infrastructure of the Federal government's investment in the international service pipeline. The contributions these programs make to diplomacy and international education must be protected and prioritized.

These programs broaden all students' horizons, benefit our country's workforce, and strengthen diplomatic ties. In turn, when we welcome international students to our universities, they strengthen our communities and enrichen discourse through diverse perspectives. The Trump Administration's rhetoric surrounding immigrants has been harmful to international students and the academic community. Following the Administration's proposed travel ban, many immigrant students at our universities have experienced tremendous uncertainty about their status. Additionally, schools across the country have seen their applicant rates of international students decline.

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, international students and scholars apply the lessons they have learned abroad to make a positive impact on our state's economy. The University of Wisconsin Madison is one of the nation's top producers of Fulbright students and scholars, with 21 students accepted into the prestigious program. In Wisconsin's 2nd District, we have welcomed nearly 7,000 international students and their families to our area and are profoundly grateful for the contributions they have made. I am incredibly proud of the students and faculty who continue to lead in the field of international education and strongly encourage my colleagues to support these vital education programs.

CONGRATULATING COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE SARAH COMBS WHO WILL ATTEND THE COLLEGE OF IDAHO ON ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIP

HON. MICHAEL K. SIMPSON

OF IDAHO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. SIMPSON, Mr. Speaker, I rise to call attention to an outstanding young student from the State of Idaho, Her name is Sarah Combs. Sarah is a graduate of the Columbia High School Class of 2017, Looking at her scholastic accomplishments and athletic talents, it's easy to predict Sarah is on a fast track to success.

Sarah's parents enrolled her in the Bogus Basin Ski Education Foundation (BBSEF) in Boise at the age of seven. The foundation was established to provide training and competition programs for aspiring young ski racers, She is an avid skier and enjoys participating in BBSEF events,

Sarah's love of sport extends to engaging people of all abilities, She is organizing a weekend event for children with disabilities, While the service project puts her on course to earn the Girls Scouts of the USA highest achievement, the Gold Award, she is most excited about helping the participants learn gymnastics, She kicked off the effort by asking her ski coach, Doug Sato, to serve as her mentor, He was happy to oblige. ''Sarah is very curious about the world and is able to make keen observations about her environment. She seeks to make significant changes and overcomes any obstacles.''

Sarah has been a patient confidante to other skiers on the team. ''She is kind to everyone, You can go to her with any question, and she figures it out,'' says one teammate. ''She shows her appreciation when you lend a hand, She is an all-around nice person,'' adds another.

''I appreciate the friends that I have made in BBSEF,'' says Sarah, ''I thank my parents especially for supporting me so that I could continue to race, and I thank the coaches as well,'' When the ski season ends you can find Sarah on the track where she runs the 400 meter and the 2-mile race,

Sarah took her academic responsibilities seriously. Ever since Sarah started high school she was the yearly recipient of the All-Academic Southern Idaho Conference, This is quite an accomplishment given her demanding training schedule,

The College of Idaho took notice of Sarah's accomplishments on the slopes when she had the opportunity to train with the College of Idaho Ski Team, While training with the ski team, the college also learned that Sarah ran cross country and track as well. The College of Idaho realized that she is the caliber of a student-athlete desired for enrollment. On National Letter of Intent Signing Day, Sarah signed for all three sports and was offered a scholarship for all three sports.

So Sarah will be a member of the Yotes Women's Alpine Ski Team, the Yotes Women's Cross Country Team, and the Yotes Women's Track and Field Team,

Sarah intends to enroll in the Pre-Physical Therapy program and take advantage of an elective that will prepare her to work with disabled athletes. There is no doubt Sarah will be

a very busy freshman, and we wish her all the best in the classroom; on the track; on the ski slopes; or any other endeavors she attempts.

May your time at the College of Idaho be a rewarding experience. Your family, friends, and Bogus Basin Ski Education Foundation are proud of you. Go Yotes.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DIANE BLACK

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, at the time of votes yesterday, I was unavoidably detained in my district. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on both H.R. 1862 and H.R. 1842.

Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on Roll Call No. 269, and YEA on Roll Call No. 270.

HONORING PROFESSOR DOUG KRESSE

HON. EDWARD R. ROYCE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. ROYCE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions and service of Professor Doug Kresse as Director of Forensics at Fullerton College in Fullerton, California. After a decade of dedication to the speech and debate team, Doug will pass on the torch to his colleagues, but remain a devoted professor and mentor at Fullerton College.

Doug Kresse was born and raised in the Pacific Northwest where he graduated from Eastern Washington University with a Bachelor's degree in English and a minor in Speech Communication. He received a Master's degree in Speech Communication from California State University, Fullerton. He taught as Director of Forensics and Speech and Communications at Seattle Pacific University in Seattle, Washington, Tiffin University and Heidelberg University in Tiffin, Ohio, and finally, Fullerton College in Fullerton, California. Doug developed the intercollegiate speech & debate program at Fullerton College and served as Director of Forensics for ten years. He coached hundreds of students into polished speakers and well-argued debaters, helping them to move forward confidently in their studies, careers, and lives. Doug was presented with the ''President's Award'' by the National Education Debate Association in March 2016 for his commitment to collegiate debate and support of his students.

A life-long learner, Doug is well known for his regular interest in news and reading. He actively participated in C-SPAN's Classroom programs for educators and was a national prize winner for C-SPAN's American Presidents series, designing a chessboard of the George H. W. Bush presidency. He continues to show C-SPAN and other news clips in the classroom as examples in his speech and debate courses, well known for his office full of VHS tapes.

In his free time, Doug can be found keeping up with the local concert scene in Los Angeles, running, and spending time with his family. He has been married to his wife, Marti, for 37 years and is the proud father to two daughters, Kristin and Carol, father-in-law to Raymond, and grandpa to Mitchell Paige Coates.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in thanking Doug Kresse for his dedication to his community and students, creating the leaders and speakers of tomorrow.

HONORING THE LIFE OF THE HONORABLE JACKALYNE PFANNENSTIEL

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and pay tribute to the life of the Honorable Ms. Jackalyne Pfannenstiel, a lifelong trailblazer dedicated to energy efficiency, who passed away on April 26, 2017, at the age of 69.

Ms. Pfannenstiel was born on September 7, 1947 in Norwich, Connecticut. She attended Clark University in Massachusetts, where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Economics and went on to get her Master's degree in Economics from the University of Hartford in Connecticut.

Ms. Pfannenstiel began her career working as an economist at the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control. With an interest in energy efficiency, Ms. Pfannenstiel moved to California in 1978 to start a new path after being hired by California's Public Utilities Commission. After two years, she went to work for Pacific Gas & Electric Company and parent company, Pacific Gas & Electric Corporation for twenty years. During her twenty years at Pacific Gas & Electric, Ms. Pfannenstiel served in various roles, most notably as Vice President of Planning and Strategic Initiatives. Through her leadership and collaboration, Ms. Pfannenstiel helped write California energy policy throughout the 1980's designed to enhance conservation.

In 2004, Ms. Pfannenstiel became a voice for energy conservation in California when she was appointed to the Energy Commission by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, and in 2006 was named as the commission's first female chairwoman. Her leadership did not stop at the state level. In 2010, President Barack Obama appointed her as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and the Environment. Her continued dedication towards energy conservation can be seen through her work on the Great Green Fleet, a squadron of 10 ships and 70 aircrafts, which run 50 percent on biofuel.

In addition to her time as Assistant Secretary, in 2013 Ms. Pfannenstiel co-founded a San Francisco start up called Advanced Microgrid Solutions aimed to enhance utility usage. Her legacy will be remembered through her accomplishments and the progress towards improved energy conservation over the years.

Ms. Jackalyne Pfannenstiel is survived by her husband Daniel, two sons Matthew and Steven Deutsch, grandson Wesley Deutsch, sister Kathleen Pratt, and brother Richard Pfannenstiel. As a mother of two sons, she never missed their games, no matter how busy of a schedule she had. It is my honor to join Ms. Jackalyne Pfannenstiel's family in celebration of the life of this inspirational woman. She truly led by example and encouraged teamwork throughout her life.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing the life, remarkable career, and achievements of Ms. Jackalyne Pfannenstiel. Her dedication towards energy conservation will be remembered for years to come.

INTRODUCING THE TAXPAYERS REQUIRE URGENT MANDATORY PROTECTION FROM EGREGIOUS DEBT ACT OF 2017

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Taxpayers Require Urgent Mandatory Protection from Egregious Debt Act of 2017, also known as the TRUMPED Act.

Those of us representing south Florida have received numerous calls and letters since the election of Mr. Trump noting the burden on the budgets of local governments and small business owners as he has used his Mar-a-lago property as an almost weekly retreat—I am sure my friends from New York have fielded similar complaints.

Mr. Speaker, our primary law enforcement agencies are proud to provide protection for any number of dignitaries who visit our great state. However, their budgets have not, and cannot, sustain the weight of Mr. Trump's weekly in season trips to Mar-a-lago—nor should they have to as Mr. Trump is provided very nice accommodations here in Washington, D.C. and Camp David in Maryland, at the taxpayer's considerable expense.

Over just one holiday alone, the Palm Beach Sheriff's Office was forced to absorb $250,000 in unforeseen expenses—this is an untenable budgetary posture for our local Sheriff's Office as that number represents a $60,000 per day bill. They must cover overtime for their officers and deploy multiple units including their Motor Unit, Strategic Intelligence Unit, Marine Unit, Aviation Unit, as well as numerous other teams that provide the fabric for a secure trip to South Florida for Mr. Trump.

Mr. Speaker, the TRUMPED Act is based on a simple premise—if Mr. Trump wants to make continual use of his properties then he may do so, but he may not do so at the taxpayer's expense. And let us be clear about something else: Mr. Trump, while burning through taxpayer dollars during these trips, actually makes financial gains when he visits his properties as the U.S. Government must rent space from him during such visits.

Mr. Speaker, it is offensive that Mr. Trump insists on a budget that unequivocally, and without mercy, attacks hardworking Americans, and then has the audacity to turn around and insist that our local police officers, first responders and small businesses suffer under his insistence that he be allowed to enjoy a lavish lifestyle at taxpayer expense. I look forward to the support of my colleagues on this important bill.

HONORING MAINE VETERAN TOM ALLEN FOR HIS SERVICE DURING WORLD WAR II AND HIS MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HON. CHELLIE PINGREE

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Ms. PINGREE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my constituent, Tom Allen, a proud World War II veteran from Augusta, Maine. At 94 years young, Tom continues to impress those who know him with his commitment to out-ski, and out-kayak the grips of old age and the passing of time.

When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Tom was a student at Harvard University in Boston, Massachusetts. He, like so many other brave men from his generation, felt the need to serve his country. In June of 1942, seven months after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Tom willingly left Harvard and joined the United States Marine Corps. Recognizing his academic strengths, the Marines sent Tom to language school where he became proficient in Japanese. Upon the completion of his training, and with the war in full swing, Tom was sent to the Pacific Theatre where he first served in Saipan. In 1945, just months after the atomic bomb destroyed the city, Tom was reassigned to an intelligence position with the Second Marine Division and sent to Nagasaki, Japan. Among his many duties as an interpreter, Tom was tasked with working directly with the Japanese to uncover where they held their war materials in hopes of demilitarizing the Japanese War Machine. A year later Tom was honorably discharged from the Marines and chose to return to Harvard to complete his undergraduate education.

At a relatively young age, Tom had accomplished more than most people do in their lifetime. His resumé of resilience and his sense of determination are some of the many positive qualities Tom has maintained into his later years. Two years ago, at the age of 92, Tom was seen skiing in the mountains of western Maine. Less than a year later, at the age of 93, Tom slipped into a kayak for a paddle around Boothbay Harbor.

Mr. Speaker, I truly admire Tom for his willingness to interrupt his Harvard education to answer our nation's call to serve. Lastly, I would like to thank him for reminding us all that age is simply a state of mind and that nothing is out of one's reach.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, on May 22, 2017, I missed a series of Roll Call votes. Had I been present, I would have voted YEA on No. 269 and No. 270.

HEATHER WILLIAMS NAMED PRINCIPAL OF NEW KATY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Heather Williams of Richmond, TX, for being named the principal of Kathleen Joerger Lindsey Elementary School.

Opening in August 2017, Lindsey Elementary School is the newest addition to the Lamar Consolidated Independent School District (ISD), the first Lamar Consolidated ISD school in Katy. This will be Heather's first time opening a new school, she said ''it's an honor.'' This year she celebrates her 20th year in education. She has held several roles, from fifth grade teacher to assistant principal to principal.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Heather for being named the principal of Lindsey Elementary School. We're confident she'll be a great role-model for the children starting school there.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably absent in the House chamber for votes Monday, May 22, 2017. Had I been present, I would have voted Nay on Roll Call votes 269 and 270.

CONGRATULATING THE JUNIOR LEAGUE OF INDIANAPOLIS ON ITS 95TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and celebrate the Junior League of Indianapolis on the occasion of its 95th Anniversary. JLI's primary mission is to promote voluntarism, to develop the leadership potential of women, and to improve the community through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers. For an astounding 95 years, JLI has worked diligently to promote these ideals and to enrich the lives of its members and the community in which they reside. The people of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District are forever grateful for the contributions to our Hoosier community, and as a formerly active member and current sustaining member, it is my distinct privilege to honor the Junior League of Indianapolis.

Ten Indianapolis women founded the JLI in the fall of 1921 to promote voluntarism throughout the city. In 1922, their first major project put JLI to the test. They successfully opened an Occupational Therapy Clinic for Riley Children's Hospital, which served Indianapolis over two and a half decades until 1948. Since then, the lasting impact of JLI's community involvement has been felt constantly throughout the city. Committed to preserving Indianapolis' rich history, the League held its headquarters in the historic French Romanesque Schnull-Rauch House from 1979 to 2009, and maintained the historic monument during their residence. Several projects like Kids in the Kitchen, Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, and the Ronald McDonald House have endured through the years and even through a few decades. The women of the Junior League choose to take on our most pressing and difficult issues, notably in their project regarding Early Prevention of School Failure in Indianapolis Public Schools from 1984 to 1990. Today, education remains a priority, with members volunteering at Stephen Foster School, IPS 67. Through a three-year partnership, the Junior League in their Signature project, ''Partners Advancing Student Success'', will work on tutoring, stocking the food pantry, and more at IPS 67. JLI also holds annually their service event, ''Around the Community—Around the Clock'', an event in which members perform 95 hours of continuous community service.

The League has nearly 1000 members today dedicating over 16,000 hours of uncompensated service each year. Through grant making, roughly $200,000 was invested into Indianapolis last year alone. In education, more than $500,000 has been invested since 2011. This year's projects are as charitable as ever. Tutors in Action provides program funding and volunteers for one on one or small group tutoring for families in transitional housing. The Kids in the Kitchen program provides nutritional information and healthy cooking techniques for families to combat childhood obesity.

The Junior League of Indianapolis has proven time and time again that it is committed and vital to the wellbeing of our city. It serves as a role model for all charitable organizations like it. The focus on developing the potential of women in our community has served as an invaluable training ground for the next generation of amazingly, talented and generous leaders. JLI states that it seeks to be a catalyst for lasting change in the lives of children and families in our community, and it has exceeded this role for 95 years and counting. These selfless women and the families that support them, deserve our gratitude. On behalf of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District, I would like to congratulate this wonderful organization on 95 years of exemplary work within our community, and wish the JLI, and all their members, the best on their journey to another 95 remarkable years.

HONORING DR. CHRIS RODRIGUEZ

HON. BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Dr. Chris Rodriguez, and to commemorate his service to the people our state as Director of the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security. Director Rodriguez is a dedicated public servant who has worked tirelessly in the intelligence field to protect and serve New Jersey and the American people.

Director Chris Rodriguez has served in multiple capacities in the U.S. Federal Government including serving more than a decade in the Central Intelligence Agency and the U.S. Department of State. He was a crucial member of the Counterterrorism Center following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 where he collaborated with federal, state, and local levels to identify and counter potential threats to the United States.

Director Chris Rodriguez began working for the people of New Jersey in 2011 where he oversaw the Department of Law and Public Safety, the Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Homeland Security and Preparedness.

Director Chris Rodriguez honorably served our country both at home and abroad. We owe a tremendous debt to our Veterans who have served in defense of our great nation, for their sacrifices have allowed the United States of America to serve as a beacon for the promise of liberty.

I thank Director Christopher Rodriguez for his many years of service to the people of New Jersey and I wish him all the best in his future endeavors.

RECOGNIZING GUAM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION NURSES IN HONOR OF NATIONAL SCHOOL NURSES DAY

HON. MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO

OF GUAM

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Ms. BORDALLO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate nurses and school nurse support staff of the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) in honor of National Nurses Week and National School Nurses Day. There are currently 44 Registered Nurses and 3 Licensed Practical Nurses serving the students of the Guam Department of Education. These nurses take on the daunting task of caring for the Guam Department of Education's more than 30,000 students and nearly 4,000 employees of the Guam Department of Education. These school nurses work day in and day out to ensure the health of our island's children so they can continue their education in the classroom.

Guam Department of Education nurses join the National Association of School Nurses in celebrating the theme of this year's School Nurses Day: Healthy Nurse. Healthy Students. They also join the American Nurses Association in celebrating the 2017 Nurses Week: The Balance of Mind, Body, and Spirit! GDOE nurses have chosen to celebrate National School Nurses Day by teaching students how to conduct hands only CPR or heart health activities.

Every year the GDOE nurses serve a critical role in providing a safe and healthy learning environment for students throughout Guam's public elementary, middle, and high schools. GDOE nurses provide frontline, critical care for the most fragile children in our community and are members of health teams that support both educational and response initiatives dedicated to improving public health. Additionally, school nurses are liaisons to the school administrators, parents and healthcare providers when it comes to attending to the physical health of our island's students.

Every school year is different and challenging for the GDOE nurses. In April 2016, the school nurses received a call from the Department of Public Health and Social Services asking them to administer 5,000 doses of TB skin test solution to GDOE students and staff who need updates. The school nurses embraced the challenge and were able to host TB clinics in almost every GDOE school for students and staff. Despite these challenges, our island's school nurses have responded to these needs with professionalism and passion for the school communities they serve.

I commend and congratulate nurses and school nurse support staff of the Guam Department of Education (GDOE) as they celebrate the 2017 National School Nurses Day and On a successful school year. I join the people of Guam in expressing our appreciation for their contributions to Guam's school communities.

NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

HON. JOYCE BEATTY

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mrs. BEATTY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call attention to May being National Mental Health Awareness month, a nationwide initiative that aims to raise awareness and fight the stigmas associated with mental health illnesses.

Nearly 44 million American adults, and millions of children experience mental health conditions each year, including depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and post-traumatic stress.

Although we have made great progress expanding access to mental health treatment with the passage of the Affordable Health Care Act, too many people still do not get the help they need.

Despite the availability of treatment, the stigma associated with mental illness continues to keep millions of Americans from getting the treatment they need.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to turn a blind eye to our citizen's mental health needs, because according to a study by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, mental illnesses cost America over $193.2 billion in lost earnings every year.

Congress must work together to ensure people living with mental illness know that they are not alone, that hope exists, and that the possibility of healing and thriving is achievable.

We should be sure that our budget, which we will be debating in the coming weeks, includes adequate funding to help.

RECOGNIZING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of international students, scholars, and the U.S. institutions of higher education they attend who have been unfairly penalized by the Trump Administration's unlawful efforts to limit travel to our country from several Muslim-majority countries.

Among many faults, the President's travel ban fails to take into account the vital contribution international students, scholars and their families make when we welcome them to this great country. This, and the many other efforts undertaken by this administration to restrict access to visas, does not make our country safer, but undermines the valuable diplomatic, economic and cultural benefits that come from creating a more welcoming and diverse nation.

International students contribute to the economic well-being of the United States. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators, during the 2015–2016 academic year, international students and their families supported 400,000 jobs and contributed nearly $33 billion to the U.S. economy. In my district alone, during the 2015–2016 academic year, 3,724 international students and their families contributed $120.3 million, supporting 797 jobs.

But this is just the immediate impact—the long-term effect of bringing talented minds from all over the world to our universities, many of whom go on to live and work and contribute to the United States, is immeasurable. When we close doors to immigrants, students, scholars, and travelers from all over the world, we close doors to our future. And when we particularly target individuals based on race or ethnicity, we not only show ourselves to be afraid of the world, we weaken our own security by cultivating enemies rather than friends.

We should not back away from maintaining an open and welcoming nation and we will continue to stand for the universal principles that bring students and scholars from all over the world to study in this great nation.

A TRIBUTE TO KELLY SUMMY

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Kelly Summy of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Kelly recently retired from the Board of Directors of the Pottawattamie County Community Foundation. He helped create the Foundation in 2007 and has served as Chairman since its establishment.

Kelly's commitment to the Pottawattamie County Community Foundation from its early years to its legacy of today will stand out for generations to come. His leadership will have a lasting impact on the Foundation and the Pottawattamie County community. When Kelly is not volunteering his time in his community, he serves as President of Midwest Ag Services of Council Bluffs.

Mr. Speaker, I applaud and congratulate Kelly for his many years of dedicated service to the Pottawattamie County Community Foundation and Pottawattamie County, Iowa. I am proud to represent him in the United States Congress and I ask that my colleagues in the House of Representatives join me in congratulating Kelly on his many accomplishments and in wishing him nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING LAVERA ETHRIDGE-WILLIAMS IN CELEBRATION OF HER 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in celebration of Mrs. LaVera Ethridge-Williams' 90th birthday. Ms. Ethridge Williams is a celebrated entrepreneur and community advocate, who has been a staple in the West Fresno community for more than fifty years.

LaVera Ethridge-Williams was born in Boley, Oklahoma to John and Alberta Ethridge. She was raised in Wewoke, Oklahoma where she received her early education. In 1945, Mrs. Ethridge-Williams moved to Fresno and continued her education at Fresno City College and California State University, Fresno.

Mrs. Ethridge-Williams married Lonzell Williams and together they were parents to three children. They've also been blessed with five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Ethridge-Williams made child care her life's passion and lifelong career. She often cared for her younger siblings growing up and cared for her own children, in addition to those of family members and friends. In 1968, she attempted to open her first child care center in Fresno. Although the banks turned her loan requests down numerous times, she continued her persistence. Eventually through private funding, Mrs. Ethridge-Williams secured funding to open her first infant child care center. After four years of working with the California State Department of Social Welfare and Department of Health and Welfare, Mrs. LaVera Ethridge-Williams' dream became a reality, with the opening of her first childcare center in West Fresno. Not stopping there, Mrs. La Vera Ethridge-Williams opened a chain of daycare centers for infants and young children in Fresno. LaVera's Infant Nursery and LaVera's Educational Center provided desperately needed childcare for working parents in the area.

Mrs. Ethridge-Williams has been rightfully honored by numerous local officials and organizations throughout her career. These include, the city of Fresno, Fresno Unified School District and the Phi Lambda Society.

Outside of her work, Mrs. Ethridge-Williams enjoys spending time with her family and several hobbies. These include traveling, fishing and attending church, where she is an active member.

She has always believed that personal success comes with a responsibility to touch the lives of others through good deeds. Today, she works to provide shelter for the homeless.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Mrs. LaVera Ethridge-Williams as she celebrates her 90th birthday. She is an inspiration for us all, having lived her life to serve others. I ask that you join me in wishing her and her family continued happiness.

SUGAR LAND REALTOR NAMED PRESIDENT-ELECT OF THE WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF REALTORS

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Jo Ann Stevens of Sugar Land, TX, for being named the 2017 President-elect of the Women's Council of Realtors, an affiliate of the National Association of Realtors.

The Women's Council is a network of realtors working to advance women as professionals and leaders in their businesses, industries and communities. Jo Ann has been a licensed realtor for over 30 years and joined the Women's Council in 1986. She's held several leadership roles in the Women's Council, such as: Local Network President, District Vice President, Governor, President of the Texas Network, and Regional Vice President for Region 9. Jo Ann has been named ''Member of the Year'' twice for Texas and will be sworn in as president on November 4, 2017. She's currently working for the Lane Real Estate Team.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations again to Jo Ann for being named President-elect of the Women's Council of Realtors. This is an amazing accomplishment and we know she will be a great leader.

WELCOMING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

HON. JAMES A. HIMES

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a globally-engaged and welcoming United States. Historically, hosting international students and scholars at our colleges and universities has been one of the most important ways America reinforces those values. I urge my colleagues and the administration to recognize the vital contribution international students, scholars, and their families make to the United States.

The cross-cultural partnerships formed through international education and exchanges offer widespread benefits for the United States. Students and their families supported 400,000 jobs in the 2015–2016 year, contributing nearly $33 billion to our national economy. Their financial and academic contributions allow universities to offer more advanced courses—often in STEM subjects—to American students. These students, the vast majority of whom do not study abroad, gain invaluable knowledge towards succeeding as global citizens through cooperation and interaction with their international peers.

As co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on International Exchange and Study and as a student who studied abroad, I recognize the enormous benefits offered by a cross-cultural education. May is a critical month on the college calendar, a time when college seniors graduate and enter the global world while high school seniors finalize their choice on where to study in the fall. The new administration's immigration policies, specifically the Travel Ban Executive Order, harvest uncertainty for students making these decisions.

Our nation's security must remain our top priority, but we must balance that with the need to remain open, welcoming and committed to driving future economic growth and opportunity. We must reassure international scholars who may be unsure about coming that their contributions are valued and that they are welcome here.

HONORING SPECIAL AGENT BILL BATES

HON. JOHN KATKO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 23, 2017

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the distinguished career of Special Agent William Bates of the U.S. Department of Defense, Office of Inspector General, Defense Criminal Investigative Service, after 32 years of dedicated government service.

Special Agent Bates' grew up in Buffalo, New York, and attended the SUNY Fredonia. Upon graduating, he served in the U.S. Army as a Veterinary Food Inspector and then worked as a Treasury Agent for the Internal Revenue Service.

In 1989, Mr. Bates joined the Defense Criminal Investigative Service where he has served as a Control Tactics Instructor and Health and Wellness Coordinator for the Syracuse, Buffalo, and Pittsburgh offices.

Throughout his esteemed career, Special Agent Bates' work includes assistance in the recovery efforts in New York City immediately following the terrorist attacks on our country on September 11, 2001 as well as the investigation of Lynx Machine Total Corporation which brought to light false testing certifications on U.S. military products. He has received several commendations during his esteemed career, and is a member of the DCIS's prestigious Million Dollar Club.

It is my honor to recognize Special Agent Bates and to congratulate him on his retirement after 32 years of devoted service to keeping our great nation safe. I wish him the very best in his retirement.

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3075–S3102

Measures Introduced: Eight bills were introduced, as follows: S. 1202–1209. **Pages S3097–98**

Message from the President: Senate received the following message from the President of the United States:

Transmitting, pursuant to law, the Budget of the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2018; referred jointly, pursuant to the order of January 30, 1975, as modified by the order of April 11, 1986; which was referred to the Committees on the Budget; and Appropriations. (PM–8) **Pages S3095–96**

Sullivan Nomination—Agreement: Senate resumed consideration of the nomination of John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State. **Pages S3076–82, S3082–92**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 93 yeas to 6 nays (Vote No. 134), Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the nomination. **Page S3080**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the nomination, post-cloture, at approximately 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017. **Page S3100**

Elwood Nomination—Cloture: Senate began consideration of the nomination of Courtney Elwood, of Virginia, to be General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency. **Page S3076**

A motion was entered to close further debate on the nomination, and, in accordance with the provisions of Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, a vote on cloture will occur upon disposition of the nomination of Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit. **Page S3076**

Prior to the consideration of this nomination, Senate took the following action:

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Legislative Session. **Page S3076**

Senate agreed to the motion to proceed to Executive Session to consider the nomination. **Page S3076**

Messages from the House: **Page S3096**

Measures Referred: **Page S3096**

Executive Communications: **Page S3096**

Executive Reports of Committees: **Pages S3096–97**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3098–99**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3099–S3100**

Additional Statements: **Pages S3094–95**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S3100**

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—134) **Page S3080**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:18 p.m., until 10 a.m. on Wednesday, May 24, 2017. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3100.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

U.S. ASSISTANCE FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs concluded a hearing to examine United States assistance for Central America, after receiving testimony from John Negroponte, McLarty Associates, Eric Farnsworth, Council of the Americas, John Wingle, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and Adriana Beltran, Washington Office on Latin America, all of Washington, D.C.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Armed Services: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of David L. Norquist, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary (Comptroller), Elaine McCusker, of Virginia, and Kari A. Bingen, of Virginia, both to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary, Robert Daigle, of Virginia, to be Director of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, Robert Story Karem, of the District of Columbia, and Kenneth P. Rapuano, of Virginia, both to be an Assistant Secretary, and routine lists in the Army, Navy,

Air Force, and Marine Corps, all of the Department of Defense.

WORLDWIDE THREATS

Committee on Armed Services: Committee concluded a hearing to examine worldwide threats, after receiving testimony from former Senator Daniel R. Coats, Director of National Intelligence; and Lieutenant General Vincent R. Stewart, USMC, Director, Defense Intelligence Agency.

CYBER POSTURE

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Cybersecurity concluded a hearing to examine the cyber posture of the Services, after receiving testimony from Vice Admiral Marshall B. Lytle III, USCG, Director, Command, Control, Communications and Computers/Cyber and Chief Information Officer, Joint Staff, J–6, Vice Admiral Michael M. Gilday, USN, Commander, United States Fleet Cyber Command, Commander, United States Tenth Fleet, Lieutenant General Paul M. Nakasone, USA, Commanding General, United States Army Cyber Command, Major General Christopher P. Weggeman, USAF, Commander, Twenty-fourth Air Force, Commander, Air Forces Cyber, and Major General Loretta E. Reynolds, USMC, Commander, Marine Forces Cyberspace Command, all of the Department of Defense.

NAVY READINESS CHALLENGES

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower received a closed briefing on Navy readiness challenges, emerging threats, and the requirements underpinning the 355 ship force structure objective from Bradley F. Herbert, Director of Executive Support, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Information Dominance/Director of Naval Intelligence, Rear Admiral (lower half) Jesse A. Wilson, Jr., USN, Director, Assessment Division, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, and Captain John E. Gumbleton, USN, Director, Financial Operations Division, Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, all of the Department of Defense.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Mira Radielovic Ricardel, of California, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Export Administration, and Sigal Mandelker, of New York, to be Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Crimes, Marshall Billingslea, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing, and Heath P. Tarbert, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary, all of the Department of the Treasury.

OUTER SPACE TREATY

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness concluded a hearing to examine reopening the American frontier, focusing on exploring how the Outer Space Treaty will impact American commerce and settlement in space, after receiving testimony from James E. Dunstan, Mobius Legal Group, PLLC, Nokesville, Virginia; Laura Montgomery, Ground Based Space Matters, Potomac, Maryland; Matthew P. Schaefer, University of Nebraska College of Law Space, Cyber and Telecommunications Law Program, Lincoln; Robert Richards, Moon Express, Inc., Cape Canaveral, Florida; Peter Marquez, Planetary Resources, Washington, D.C.; Mike Gold, Space Systems Loral, Chevy Chase, Maryland; and Pamela A. Melroy, Arlington, Virginia.

NATIONAL AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety concluded a hearing to examine making implementation of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ground-level ozone attainable, including S. 263, to facilitate efficient State implementation of ground-level ozone standards, and S. 452, to amend the Clean Air Act to delay the enforcement and implementation of the 2015 national ambient air quality standards for ozone, after receiving testimony from Senator Flake; Misael Cabrera, Director, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Phoenix; Shawn M. Garvin, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Dover; Ahron Hakimi, Kern Council of Governments, Bakersfield, California; Kyle Zeringue, Baton Rouge Area Chamber, Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and Monica Kraft, University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, on behalf of the American Thoracic Society.

BORDER SECURITY

Committee on the Judiciary: Subcommittee on Border Security and Immigration concluded a hearing to examine building America's trust through border security, focusing on progress on the southern border, after receiving testimony from Ronald D. Vitiello, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security.

INTELLIGENCE

Select Committee on Intelligence: Committee met in closed session to receive a briefing on certain intelligence matters from officials of the intelligence community.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 24 public bills, H.R. 2593–2616; and 2 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 60; and H. Res. 351, were introduced. **Pages H4502–03**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H4404–05**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1461, to amend title 38, United States Code, to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit an annual report to Congress relating to the use of official time by employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to limit the instances in which official time may be granted for certain purposes to employees of the Department, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–146, Part 1);

H.R. 1162, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to veterans (H. Rept. 115–147);

H.R. 1005, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans (H. Rept. 115–148);

H.R. 467, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 115–149, Part 1);

H.R. 624, to restrict the inclusion of social security account numbers on documents sent by mail by the Federal Government, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 115–150, Part 1);

H.R. 1848, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program on the use of medical scribes in Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers (H. Rept. 115–151); and

H. Res. 352, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1973) to prevent the sexual abuse of minors and amateur athletes by requiring the prompt reporting of sexual abuse to law enforcement authorities, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1761) to amend title 18, United States Code, to criminalize the knowing consent of the visual depiction, or live transmission, of a minor engaged in sexually explicit conduct, and for other purposes; and providing for proceedings during the period from May 26, 2017, through June 5, 2017 (H. Rept. 115–152). **Page H4502**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Davidson to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H4427**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:24 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H4429**

Moment of Silence: The House observed a moment of silence in memory of the victims of the terrorist attack in Manchester, England. **Page H4440**

Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017—Rule for Consideration: The House agreed to H. Res. 348, providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 953) to amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to clarify Congressional intent regarding the regulation of the use of pesticides in or near navigable waters, and for other purposes, by a recorded vote of 232 ayes to 189 noes, Roll No. 272, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 229 yeas to 191 nays, Roll No. 271. **Pages H4433–40**

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2017: H.R. 1809, amended, to reauthorize and improve the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974; **Pages H4441–53**

Improving Support for Missing and Exploited Children Act of 2017: H.R. 1808, amended, to amend and improve the Missing Children's Assistance Act; **Pages H4453–57**

Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017: H.R. 2288, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to reform the rights and processes relating to appeals of decisions regarding claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, by a ⅔ yea-and-nay vote of 418 yeas with none voting "nay", Roll No. 273; **Pages H4457–66, H4483**

Amending title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans: H.R. 1005, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the provision of adult day health care services for veterans; **Pages H4468–69**

No Hero Left Untreated Act: H.R. 1162, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to provide access to magnetic EEG/EKG-guided resonance therapy to veterans; **Pages H4469–73**

Veterans Affairs Prescription Data Accountability Act of 2017: H.R. 1545, to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to disclose certain patient information to State controlled substance monitoring programs; **Pages H4473–75**

Quicker Veterans Benefits Delivery Act of 2017: H.R. 1725, amended, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the treatment of medical evidence provided by non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical professionals in support of claims for disability compensation under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; **Pages H4475–76**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to submit certain reports relating to medical evidence submitted in support of claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary.''. **Page H4476**

Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2017: H.R. 1329, amended, to increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and to improve the processing of claims by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs; **Pages H4476–77**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To increase, effective as of December 1, 2017, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans, and for other purposes.''. **Page H4477**

Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign Authorization Act of 2017: H.R. 1370, amended, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Secretary of Homeland Security to issue Department of Homeland Security-wide guidance and develop training programs as part of the Department of Homeland Security Blue Campaign; and **Pages H4480–83**

Enforcing Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2017: H.R. 2473, amended, to ensure compliance with the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015, and to make strides toward eradicating human trafficking; **Pages H4484–89**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: ''To direct the Attorney General to study issues relating to human trafficking, and for other purposes.''. **Page H4489**

Department of Homeland Security Stop Asset and Vehicle Excess Act: The House agreed to take from the Speaker's table and concur in the Senate amendments to H.R. 366, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to direct the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to make certain improvements in managing the Department's vehicle fleet. **Page H4480**

Privileged Resolution—Intent to Offer: Representative Sánchez announced her intent to offer a privileged resolution. **Page H4484**

Suspensions—Proceedings Postponed: The House debated the following measures under suspension of the rules. Further proceedings were postponed.

Veterans Affairs Scheduling Accountability Act: H.R. 467, to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to ensure that each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs complies with requirements relating to scheduling veterans for health care appointments, and to improve the uniform application of directives of the Department; and **Pages H4467–68**

Protecting the Rights of Individuals Against Technological Exploitation Act: H.R. 2052, to amend the Uniform Code of Military Justice to prohibit the wrongful broadcast or distribution of intimate visual images. **Pages H4477–80**

Presidential Message: Read a message from the President wherein he transmitted to Congress his Budget of the United States Government for Fiscal Year 2018—referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed (H. Doc. 115–3). **Pages H4440–41**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H4439–40, H4440, and H4483. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Committee Meetings

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government held an oversight hearing on the Internal Revenue Service. Testimony was heard from J. Russell George, Treasury Inspector General, Tax Administration; and Nina E. Olson, National Taxpayer Advocate, Internal Revenue Service.

FISCAL YEAR 2018 BUDGET REQUEST FOR U.S. CYBER COMMAND: CYBER MISSION FORCE SUPPORT TO DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OPERATIONS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities held a hearing entitled

''Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request for U.S. Cyber Command: Cyber Mission Force Support to Department of Defense Operations''. Testimony was heard from Admiral Michael Rogers, Commander, U.S. Cyber Command.

THE NEED FOR MORE RESPONSIBLE REGULATORY AND ENFORCEMENT POLICIES AT THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Workforce Protections held a hearing entitled ''The Need for More Responsible Regulatory and Enforcement Policies at the EEOC''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE TO THE ZIKA VIRUS: CONTINUING CHALLENGES

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations held a hearing entitled ''U.S. Public Health Response to the Zika Virus: Continuing Challenges''. Testimony was heard from Luciana Borio, Acting Chief Scientist, Food and Drug Administration; Rick A. Bright, Director, Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Department of Health and Human Services; Anthony Fauci, Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health; Timothy Persons, Chief Scientist, Government Accountability Office; and Lyle R. Petersen, Director, Division of Vector-Borne Diseases, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

DISRUPTER SERIES: DELIVERING TO CONSUMERS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection held a hearing entitled ''Disrupter Series: Delivering to Consumers''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

VISA OVERSTAYS: A GAP IN THE NATION'S BORDER SECURITY

Committee on Homeland Security: Subcommittee on Border and Maritime Security held a hearing entitled ''Visa Overstays: A Gap in the Nation's Border Security''. Testimony was heard from the following Department of Homeland Security officials: John Wagner, Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner, Customs and Border Protection; Clark Settles, Assistant Director, National Security Division, Homeland Security Investigations; Michael Dougherty, Acting Assistant Secretary, Border, Immigration, and Trade Office of Policy; and John Roth, Inspector General.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee began a markup on H.R. 2431, the ''Michael Davis, Jr. and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act''; H.R. 2407, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and for other purposes; and H.R. 2406, to amend section 442 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and for other purposes.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on H.R. 1107, the ''Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act''; H.R. 2199, the ''Federal Land Asset Inventory Reform Act of 2017''; H.R. 2423, the ''Washington County, Utah, Public Lands Management Implementation Act''; and H.R. 2425, the ''Public Lands Telecommunications Act''. Testimony was heard from Representatives Amodei, Cramer, Stewart, and Huffman; Robert McDougal, Commissioner, Pershing County, Nevada; Victor Iverson, Chairman, Washington County Commission, Utah; and public witnesses.

THE STATUS AND FUTURE OF THE COBELL LAND CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs held a hearing entitled ''The Status and Future of the Cobell Land Consolidation Program''. Testimony was heard from James Cason, Acting Deputy Secretary, Department of Interior.

PROTECTING AGAINST CHILD EXPLOITATION ACT OF 2017; PROTECTING YOUNG VICTIMS FROM SEXUAL ABUSE ACT OF 2017

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on H.R. 1761, the ''Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act of 2017''; and H.R. 1973, the ''Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act of 2017''. The Committee granted, by voice vote, a structured rule for H.R. 1973 and H.R. 1761. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule makes in order as original text for purpose of amendment an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–20 and provides that it shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against that amendment in the nature of a

substitute. The rule makes in order only those further amendments printed in part A of the Rules Committee report. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendments printed in part A of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 2, the rule provides one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the bill. The rule provides that an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 115–19 shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. The rule waives all points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended. The rule makes in order only the further amendment printed in part B of the Rules Committee report, if offered by the Member designated in the report, which shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule waives all points of order against the amendment printed in part B of the report. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. In section 3, the rule provides that on any legislative day during the period from May 26, 2017, through June 5, 2017: the Journal of the proceedings of the previous day shall be considered as approved; and the Chair may at any time declare the House adjourned to meet at a date and time to be announced by the Chair in declaring the adjournment. Finally, section 4 of the rule provides that the Speaker may appoint Members to perform the duties of the Chair for the duration of the period addressed by section 3. Testimony was heard from Chairman Goodlatte, and Representatives Jackson Lee, Johnson of Louisiana, and Costa.

EXPANDING THE ROLE OF STATES IN EPA RULEMAKING

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Environment held a hearing entitled ''Expanding the Role of States in EPA Rulemaking''. Testimony was heard from Misael Cabrera, Director, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality; Becky Keogh, Director, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality; and a public witness.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND CHALLENGES AT THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Accomplishments and Challenges at the SBA's Office of International Trade''. Testimony was heard from Peter J. Cazamias, Associate Administrator, Office of International Trade, Small Business Administration.

INCREASING U.S. COMPETITIVENESS AND PREVENTING AMERICAN JOBS FROM MOVING OVERSEAS

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Increasing U.S. Competitiveness and Preventing American Jobs from Moving Overseas''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

PROTECTING AMERICANS' IDENTITIES: EXAMINING EFFORTS TO LIMIT THE USE OF SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Social Security; and Subcommittee on Information Technology of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held a joint hearing entitled ''Protecting Americans' Identities: Examining Efforts to Limit the Use of Social Security Numbers''. Testimony was heard from Gregory C. Wilshusen, Director, Information Security Issues, Government Accountability Office; Marianna LaCanfora, Acting Deputy Commissioner, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, Social Security Administration; David DeVries, Chief Information Officer, Office of Personnel Management; Karen Jackson, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; and John Oswalt, Executive Director for Privacy, Office of Information and Technology, Department of Veterans Affairs.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Russia Investigation Task Force held a hearing on ongoing intelligence activities. Testimony was heard from a public witness. Testimony was heard from a public witness.

ONGOING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence: Russia Investigation Task Force held a hearing on ongoing intelligence activities. Testimony was heard from a public witness. This hearing was closed.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request and justification for fiscal year 2018 for the Navy and Marine Corps, 10:30 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower, to hold hearings to examine industry perspectives on options and considerations for achieving a 355 ship Navy, 9:30 a.m., SR–232A.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, to hold hearings to examine Department of Energy atomic energy defense activities and programs, 2:30 p.m., SD–G50.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security, to hold hearings to examine pool safety, focusing on the tenth anniversary of the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, 2:30 p.m., SR–253.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cybersecurity Policy, to hold hearings to examine American leadership in the Asia-Pacific, focusing on economic issues, 2:15 p.m., SD–419.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine border insecurity, focusing on the rise of MS–13 and other transnational criminal organizations, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: to hold hearings to examine the nominations of Vishal J. Amin, of Michigan, to be Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator, Executive Office of the President, Stephen Elliott Boyd, of Alabama, to be an Assistant Attorney General, Department of Justice, and Lee Francis Cissna, of Maryland, to be Director of United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism, to hold hearings to examine law enforcement access to data stored across borders, focusing on facilitating cooperation and protecting rights, 2:30 p.m., SD–226.

Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship: business meeting to consider pending calendar business, Time to be announced, Room to be announced.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs: business meeting to consider S. 1094, to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs, 2:30 p.m., SR–418.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, 10 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Defense, oversight hearing on the National Guard and Reserve, 10 a.m., H–140 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government, oversight hearing on the General Services Administration, 10 a.m., H–309 Capitol.

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Corps of Engineers (Civil Works) and the Bureau of Reclamation, 10:30 a.m., 2362–B Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Department of Education, 11 a.m., 2358–C Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, budget hearing on the Indian Health Service, 1 p.m., 2007 Rayburn.

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, oversight hearing entitled "High Risk American Indian and Alaska Native Programs (Education, Healthcare, Energy)", 2 p.m., 2007 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Homeland Security, budget hearing on the Department of Homeland Security, 3 p.m., 2358–A Rayburn.

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, hearing entitled "Department of the Navy FY 2018 Budget Request for Seapower and Projection Forces", 2 p.m., 2212 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Tactical Air and Land Forces, hearing entitled "Ground Force Modernization Budget Request", 3:30 p.m., 2118 Rayburn.

Committee on the Budget, Full Committee, hearing entitled "The President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget", 9:30 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Education and the Workforce, Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development, hearing entitled "Empowering Students and Families to Make Informed Decisions on Higher Education", 10:30 a.m., 2175 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, markup on H. Res. 201, expressing support to the Government of Argentina for its investigation into the terrorist bombing of the Embassy of Israel in Buenos Aires on March 17, 1992; H. Res. 259, expressing concern and condemnation over the political, economic, social, and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela; H. Res. 336, reaffirming a strong commitment to the United States—Mexico Partnership; and H.R. 1918, the "Nicaragua Investment Conditionality Act of 2017", 1 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, hearing entitled "Nuclear Deal Fallout: The Global Threat of Iran", 2 p.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on House Administration, Full Committee, hearing entitled "Oversight of the Architect of the Capitol's Office of Inspector General", 11 a.m., 1310 Longworth.

Committee on the Judiciary, Full Committee, to continue markup on H.R. 2431, the "Michael Davis, Jr. and Danny Oliver in Honor of State and Local Law Enforcement Act"; H.R. 2407, to amend the Homeland Security

Act of 2002 to establish United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, and for other purposes; H.R. 2406, to amend section 442 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and for other purposes, and the ''Secret Service Reauthorization Act of 2017, 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''Examining Impacts of Federal Natural Resources Laws Gone Astray'', 9 a.m., 1324 Longworth.

Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing on the ''Community Reclamation Partnerships Act'', 2 p.m., 1324 Longworth.

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Subcommittee on the Interior, Energy and the Environment; and Subcommittee on Intergovernmental Affairs, joint hearing entitled ''Examining 'Sue and Settle' Agreements: Part I'', 2 p.m., 2154 Rayburn.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Research and Technology; and Subcommittee on Oversight, joint hearing entitled ''Examining the Overhead Cost of Research'', 10 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 1684, the ''Disaster Assistance Support for Communities and Homeowners Act of 2017''; H.R. 2258, the ''ADVANCE Act''; H.R. 2518, the ''Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2017''; H.R. 2547, the ''Veterans Expanded Trucking Opportunities Act of 2017''; H.R. 2548, the ''FEMA Reauthorization Act of 2017''; and the ''Federal Maritime Commission Authorization Act of 2017'', 10 a.m., 2167 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2018'', 10:30 a.m., 334 Cannon.

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing entitled ''VA Financial Management'', 2 p.m., 334 Cannon.

Committee on Ways and Means, Full Committee, markup on H.R. 2372, ''Veterans Equal Treatment Ensures Relief and Access Now Act''; H.R. 2579, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow the premium tax credit with respect to unsubsidized COBRA continuation coverage; and H.R. 2581, the ''Verify First Act'', 10 a.m., 1100 Longworth.

Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Hearing on the President's Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Proposals with U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin'', 2 p.m., 1100 Longworth.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

10 a.m., Wednesday, May 24

Senate Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Senate will continue consideration of the nomination of John J. Sullivan, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of State, post-cloture.

Following disposition of the nomination of John J. Sullivan, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Amul R. Thapar, of Kentucky, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

10 a.m., Wednesday, May 24

House Chamber

Program for Wednesday: Consideration of H.R. 953—Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act of 2017. Consideration of H.R. 1973—Protecting Young Victims from Sexual Abuse Act. (Subject to a Rule) and H.R. 1761—Protecting Against Child Exploitation Act of 2017 (Subject to a Rule). Consideration of measures under suspension of the Rules.

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